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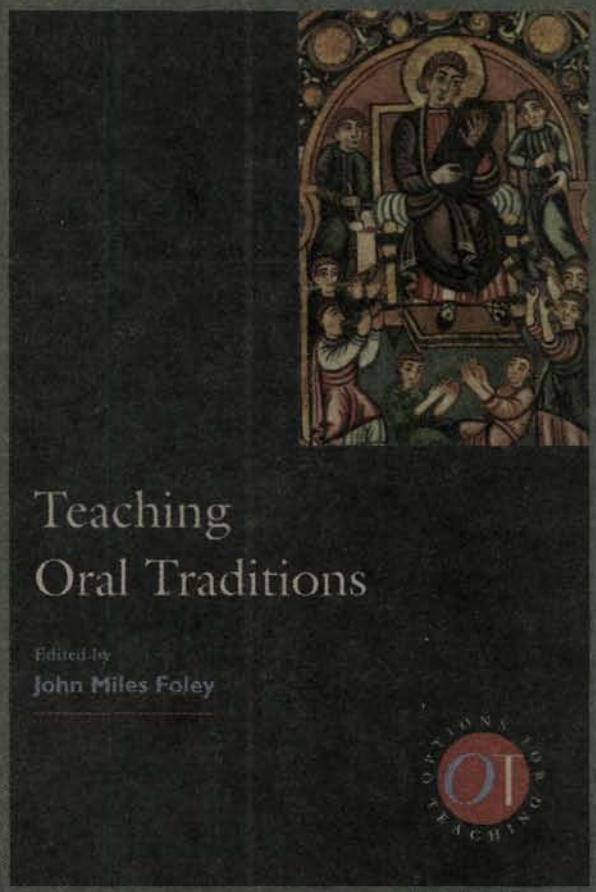

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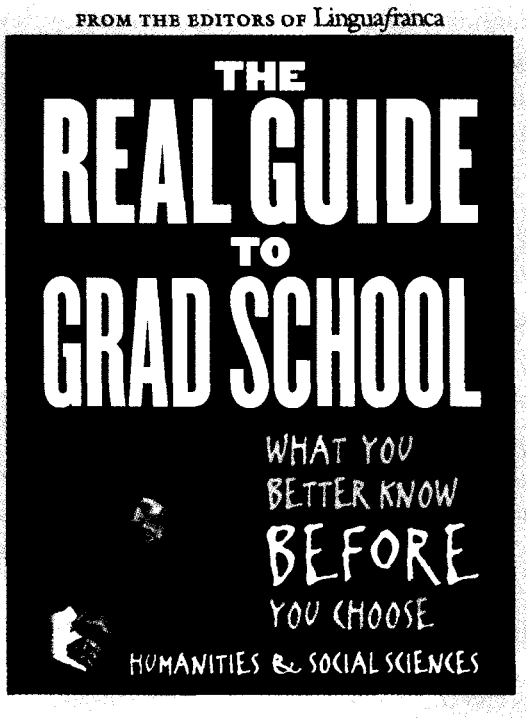

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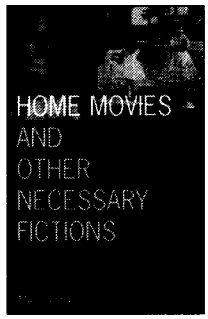

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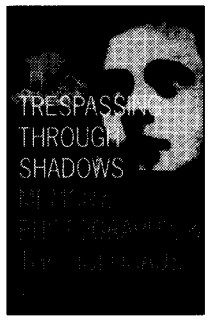

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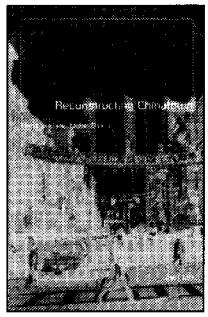

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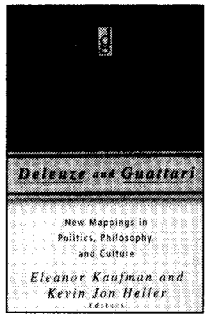

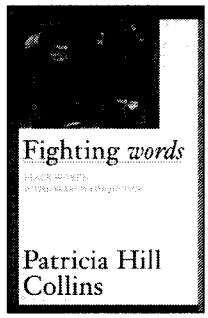

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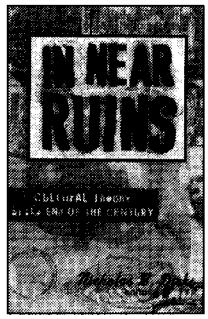

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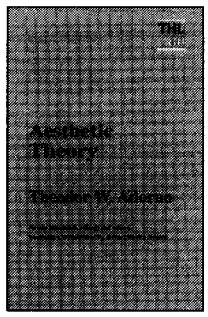

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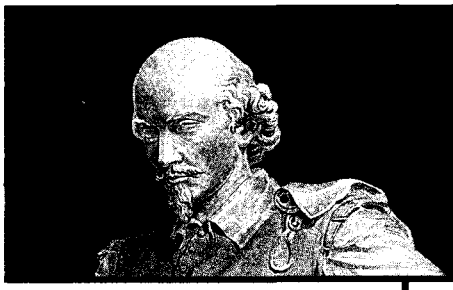

Table of Contents

Lingua Franca: A mixed language or jargon used in the Levant, consisting largely of Italian words deprived of their inflexions. Also *transf.* Any mixed jargon formed as a medium of intercourse between people speaking different languages. *Fig.* 1870 LOWELL, *Among my bks.* Ser. I. 170 "What concern have we with the shades of dialect in Homer or Theocritus, provided they speak the spiritual *lingua franca* that abolishes all alienage of race?"

7 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

8 FIELD NOTES
Professor vibrator/Academia's funniest ad campaign/ A college president clones his dog, and more

16 BREAKTHROUGH BOOKS
The Home

19 INSIDE PUBLISHING
Adorno's children/The fungus in history/Sociology's greatest hits

28 The Case for Bardolatry
Harold Bloom's spirited, idiosyncratic new book challenges the assumptions of today's Shakespeare scholars. With characteristic extravagance, the author of The Western Canon *declares that the best critical approach to the Bard is rapture. Should we bury Bloom, or praise him?*
BY WILLIAM W. KERRIGAN

39 Black Like Me
Since the early 1970s, Adrian Piper's conceptual art has made bold statements about race, racism, and the ambiguities of racial identity. But now that the art world has finally caught up with her, the Wellesley philosopher is moving on.
BY ADAM SHATZ

56 The Second Sex and the Dismal Science
Is the study of Homo economicus nothing but economics by men, for men, and about men? Feminist economists are saying exactly that. If only they could get the high priests of the profession to listen.
BY MICHAEL STEINBERGER

74 Advertisements for Myself
As universities embrace the Internet, faculty members are building their own Web sites. These sites often raise academic self-display to the level of performance art.
BY VICKI HSUEH

80 CLASSIFIED

83 CONFERENCES

84 HYPOTHESES
Jim Holt asks, Is death necessary?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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ALL ABOUT ELAINE

Without entering into any of the general controversies that surround Elaine Showalter, I would like to add a personal footnote to Emily Eakin's profile ["Who's Afraid of Elaine Showalter?" September]. I met Professor Showalter on one occasion, some years ago. At that time, she was already one of the major figures in the profession and probably the most widely admired feminist critic in the American academy. I was a job-seeking postdoctoral fellow who had never held a tenure-track position. But from the unaffected intellectual respect and personal kindness with which she treated me, you could never have guessed the vast difference between our statuses; indeed, she could not have been more friendly or more gracious had I been someone on her professional level.

Since this sort of experience is by no means universal in dealing with academic stars, it seems worth noting. Of course, my little anecdote proves nothing, one way or the other, about the conceptual merits of Professor Showalter's recent writings on consumer culture, the academic labor market, and hysterical illnesses. But I cannot believe any characterization of her that suggests personal callousness, especially callousness toward younger and less secure members of the profession.

CARL FREEDMAN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

For the second time, editors of *Lingua Franca* have annoyed their readers with an uncritical, fawning puff of Elaine Showalter. The first was Daniel Zalewski's "Check Your Head" [Inside Publishing, April/May 1997]. And now Emily Eakin praises Showalter as a "big-picture theorist," "strong on overarching ideas," and describes her penchant for "bold, sweeping claims over subtle analysis" as a "distinctive trait." The editors fail to recognize that these are also the distinctive traits of religious zealots—indeed, they are traits of the very UFO abductees toward whom Showalter thinks she's applying skepticism.

Eakin refers to Showalter's "affectionate condescension" toward those who disagree with her, but she fails to note that this attitude is aimed at those who use reason and evidence in making claims. In fact, reason and evidence were the only things from which *Hystories* was a "declaration of independence." Showalter's book is riddled with self-contradictions. For instance, she claims that liberation cannot occur unless people speak for themselves, but then goes on to deny Gulf War veterans that privilege, "liberating" them by speaking for them about their hysteria as she exhumes scientifically discredited Freudianism as "evidence."

Zalewski had referred to Showalter's arguments as "fierce." Eakin's piece does nothing to redeem that assessment. What has the academy come to when work that is sloppy and self-contradictory is referred to by academic news journals as "fierce" and "bold" and university presses promote chaos, calling it "reason" on their book jackets?

MARYANN SPURGIN
SHREVEPORT, LA
NAOMI WEISSTEIN
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE
SUNY-BUFFALO

Since *Genders* has just published its latest issue to our largest audience ever, and has published continuously since its founding in 1988, we were surprised to see ourselves described as "short-lived" in your profile of Elaine Showalter. You are mistaken, as a quick check of the *MLA Directory of Periodicals, 1996–98* would have shown. Perhaps you only meant to say that Showalter's affiliation with *Genders* was fleeting, which it was.

We are happy that you consider our journal "influential." You can find our newest issue, published in July of this year, on the Web at www.genders.org. We remain a refereed journal, committed to publishing the best and most innovative work in gender studies. We believe that gender studies is still a developing field and the most influential work is yet to come.

ANN KIBBEY, EXECUTIVE EDITOR
ELLEN BERRY, CO-EDITOR
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GENDERS

POWER CORRUPTS

Michael Levenson's trenchant critique of Judith Butler ["Speaking to Power," September] suggests a puzzling and distressing question about her reception on the current intellectual scene. Why has Butler, like Foucault before her, been embraced so eagerly by academics who imagine themselves to be on the political left? Despite her personal commitments, Butler's philosophy is more obviously suited to the right and even, I would argue, the far right. Once the apparatus of power has been absolutized, it does not much matter whether one adores it with Nietzsche or claims to deplore it with Butler. *Pace* Orwell, absolute power does not demand to be loved; it asks only to be feared and accepted at its own valuation. If the possibilities for "resistance" are limited to gestures like cross-dressing and appropriating the abusive language of our oppressors, then the fascists among us have nothing to fear. Would a little gender bending have helped the inmates of the Warsaw ghetto? Will it help the women of Afghanistan today?

BARBARA NEWMAN
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

DIDEROT DIDN'T

Most likely it was inadvertent, but Jim Holt's column "The Premise Keepers" [Hypotheses, July/August] nicely illustrates a relevant point: Attempts to escape the coercive force of logic by relying on the seduction of narrative are subject to their own kind of insidious flaws.

Holt recounts the "great confronta-

continued on page 79

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Field *Notes*

MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER

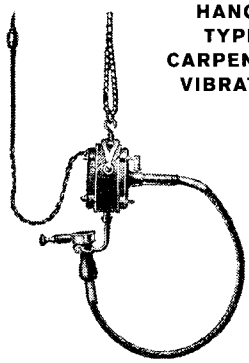
IN 1977, RACHEL MAINES, A part-time lecturer at the University of Pittsburgh, was doing the most banal sort of historical research, flipping languidly through the pages of her primary materials—turn-of-the-century needlework magazines such as *Modern Priscilla* and *Woman's Home Companion*—in search of evidence for a paper on textile arts. As her gaze wandered toward the margins of the pages, she found herself distracted by the quaintly naughty advertisements: cures for alcoholism containing 44 percent alcohol, primitive abortifacients called "cycle restorers," and electrical vibrators. Wait a second, she thought. Vibrators? In 1906?

"The pleasures of youth will throb within you," claimed one pitch. "30,000 thrilling, invigorating, penetrating, revitalizing vibrations per minute," burbled another, from the Swedish Vibrator Company of Chicago. Maines could hardly believe her eyes. "My reaction to their turgid prose was to assume that I simply had a dirty mind," writes Maines in her new book, *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*, appearing in December from Johns Hopkins University Press. "I was, after all, twenty-seven years old, between marriages, a very angry feminist, and inclined to interpret everything I saw or read as some manifestation of the war between the sexes."

Still, Maines continued to take notes on the gadgets—certain all the while that "no one would ever again take me seriously as a scholar if I continued this line of research." (Her suspicions were correct, though she had no idea how out of control things would get.) After completing her dissertation in 1983, while teaching at Clarkson University in northern New York, she began searching for the artifacts themselves—finding them at last (labeled "musculo-skeletal relaxation devices") at an obscure archive of electrical medical devices called the Bakken Library and Museum of Electricity in Life in Minneapolis.

But were these clumsy machines really intended for sexual use? Yes, Maines discovered, though not (at least initially) for amateurs. The sometimes eyebrow-raisingly medieval-looking thrummers were designed for doctors, to speed up a laborious task they had performed for centuries—the medical production of female orgasm, a.k.a. "the hysterical paroxysm." Manual genital massage had long been applied as a treatment for hysteria; unsurprisingly, it was found to ease chronic symptoms such as anxiety and sleeplessness. Hippocrates prescribed the therapy, as did nearly every Western medical authority up to the nineteenth century. In 1653, the Dutch physician Pieter van Foreest noted that "this kind of stimulation with the finger is recommended [especially] for widows, those who live chaste lives, and female religious."

Not that the doctors enjoyed bringing nuns to therapeutic orgasm. Far from it: Many medical authorities complained of both the tediousness and complexity of the task (one seventeenth-century physician compared it to trying to rub one's stomach and pat one's head simultaneously). The advent of mechanical substitutions, such as steam-powered massagers and hydriatic douches (precursors, perhaps, of contemporary shower attachments), was greeted with enthusiasm. And when electrical technology became available, inventors promptly whipped up a range of timesaving agitators capable, in the words of one turn-of-the-century doctor, of reducing "a painstaking hour" to "a short five to ten minutes." It was a small step from the doctor's office to home marketing of the devices, complete with assurances that they could be used "in the privacy of dressing room or boudoir."



HANGING TYPE OF CARPENTER VIBRATOR, 1904

Exhilarated by her discovery of what seemed to be a fresh chapter in the history of technology, Maines began presenting her research to academic audiences—emphasizing the ways in which the androcentric Western medical tradition had pathologized clitoris-centered female sexuality. Reactions were dubious. "In mixed groups," she recalls in the introduction to *The Technology of Orgasm*, "the women look uncomfortable and ask little, although they laugh just the same; they are aware that it is a major breach of etiquette to mention in mixed company the relative inefficiency of penetration as a means of producing female orgasm." And many men, she realized, seemed to take her findings as a personal criticism. One professor argued heatedly that the sexual experience of women using vibrators was "not the real thing." (Others had more on-point remarks: A Darwin scholar observed that doctors who did not recognize that their patients were experiencing orgasm had clearly not witnessed the phenomenon in their own wives.)

Maines's colleagues at Clarkson—where she taught first in the liberal studies program and later in the School of Management—were similarly flummoxed. At one point, her dean in liberal studies publicized a grant she had received

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by announcing merely that she would study "the impact of small appliances in the home." Then, in 1986, Maines lost her teaching job. (She found out when she picked up a list of office assignments for the coming term.) Her research interests, it was true, no longer seemed to match those of the School of Management. But she received two other explanations: The dean feared that alumni donations would dry up if they learned that a faculty member was researching vibrators, and moreover, her high energy level "wasn't compatible with the rest of the faculty."

Discouraged about her academic prospects, Maines started a private business called Maines & Associates, which provides catalog inventory and research services for museums and archives. But in 1988 when she noticed a call for papers for a special issue of *Technology and Society*, to be edited by distinguished electrical historian James Brittain, she submitted a paper entitled "Socially Camouflaged Technologies: The Case of the Electromechanical Vibrator." The turn-of-the-century vibrator, she argued, was, like other products, used for socially taboo purposes and promoted in coded language to reach its market. Maines had no inkling of any trouble to come—save an odd acceptance letter from Brittain, which noted that her paper would act as a test of the journal's publication policy, since the editors had not published an article of this type "since they began in 1884."

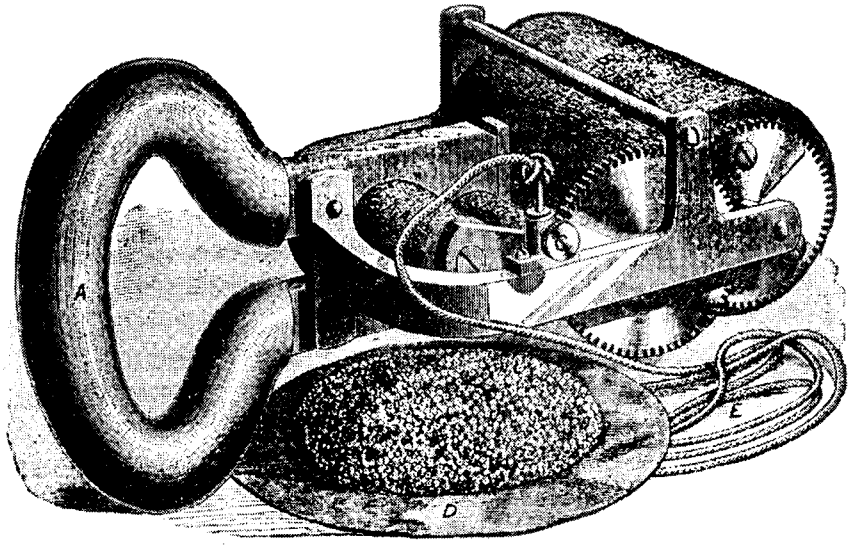
The issue came out in June 1989. The following September, she received a call from *Technology and Society*'s editor, Robert Whelchel, a professor of electrical engineering at Tri-State University in Angola, Indiana. The technical advisory board of the journal's sponsor, the venerable Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), was threatening to withdraw the journal's charter, alleging that the article was a hoax. As a result, Whelchel needed Maines's Social Security number to prove that she existed.

"When we got the paper, I thought, some people may get upset, but we can handle it," recalls Whelchel ruefully. "But the reaction was orders of magnitude higher than I expected." The board insisted the editors prove the submission had been refereed, complaining that the article's numerous Greek and Latin references "read like a parody of an IEEE article." (After the problem was resolved, the journal received numerous letters of support and found that its subscription rate rose in response to the controversy—a hint, perhaps, that electrical engineers were interested in something livelier than "Rural Electrification in Nicaragua.")

In retrospect, Maines found the controversy absurd and decided to write about it for the *Times Higher Education Supplement*. It was a case, she says, of technology historians used to studying "boys and their toys." (Her husband termed the incident "Attack of the Dweebs.") The curator of the Bakken collection, Ellen Kuhfeld, puts it more pungently: "It's just a matter of people finding again that there's more to history than they expect. And anyone who does academic work wets his pants at the thought of controversy, except for the ones who salivate—but there are bodily fluids produced, no matter what."

More soberly, Whelchel sees the conflict as illuminating the larger problems the engineering establishment has had in assimilating feminist perspectives. "We're making progress," he says. "But you know, it's an issue that constantly has to be addressed." His journal is giving it another try: A call just went out for an upcoming issue on gender and technology.

EMILY NUSSBAUM



DR. JOHN BUTLER'S ELECTRO-MASSAGE MACHINE, 1888

The turn-of-the-century vibrator was used for socially taboo purposes and promoted in coded language.

COURTESY JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

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BREAKING AWAY

WHEN ABC SLIPPED IN THE NATIONAL RATINGS, THE TV network launched a massive advertising campaign. When enrollment at Indiana University's College of Arts & Sciences fell off by 20 percent, the school did the same thing. Arriving at the Bloomington campus for orientation last June, incoming freshmen found themselves transformed into what ad people call the target demographic. Confronting them from the walls of meeting rooms and corridors, and the interiors of several shuttle buses, were colorful posters bearing the following decree: "Major in Arts and Sciences, Think for a Living." One of the posters added: "Do What You Want When You Graduate Or Wait 20 Years For Your Mid-Life Crisis." Another boasted that the liberal arts would provide "Insurance For When The Robots Take Over All The Boring Jobs."

Indiana's plight is old news. For more than a decade, students have been flocking to pre-professional programs at the expense of the liberal arts. But the College's decision to employ the Indianapolis advertising firm Young & Laramore to address the problem is new—and highly untested. So, have the liberal arts found a new lifeline? At this point, it's too early to tell: The targeted freshmen still have a year or so before they're expected to declare majors. Unable to wait, *Lingua Franca* asked six experts to render their verdicts. We invite further comment.

Debra Goldman, columnist for *Adweek*.

"In their effort to give the gray lady of the academy a little brand personality, IU's agency locked onto the time-honored youth-targeted strategy of making it cool. Ignoring the product to focus on the consumer, the campaign positions majoring in the arts and sciences somewhere between an act of nonconformity and an insurance policy against midlife crisis. The trouble is this one-rebellion-fits-all strategy is a tad too generic. Are undergrads actually supposed to relate to that half-century-old mom and dad iconography—a parental image they only know from *Nick at Nite*? Do they really see a life of bureaucratic conformity as the alternative to a liberal arts education? Or are students flocking to job-track degrees precisely because to them business already represents the highest form of self-expression? The screaming irony of selling the liberal arts like a pair of jeans is that the hard work of a humanities education violates the ethos of modern marketing. The agency might have better luck with another standard from the arsenal of postmodern pitchdom, the self-subverting ad. Something like 'Major in the arts and sciences: After four years of communing with civilization's great minds, you could be immune to stupid ads like this one.'"

• • • •

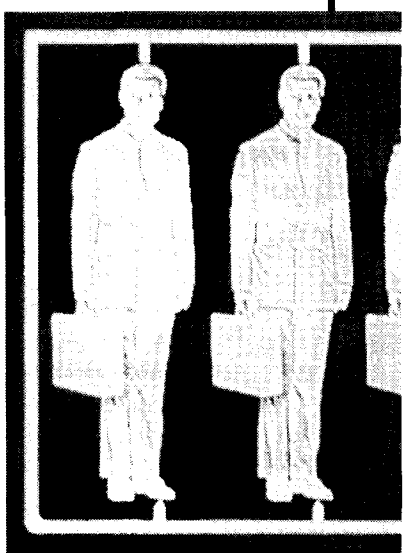
Gerald Graff, Pullman Professor of English and Education at the University of Chicago and author of *Beyond the Culture Wars* (Norton, 1993).

"The ads have it both ways. On the one hand, the slogan 'Think for a Living' means 'Commit to the thinking life rather than to business success.' On the other hand, it also means 'Commit to the thinking life and you'll succeed in business.' It's easy to mock these ads for papering over such a contradiction. My own view, however, is that the very ambiguity of these images expresses a truth about the divided potential of liberal arts training, which does turn some students into social critics, does give other students entry into corporate jobs, and does both for some students at the same time."

• • • •

Roger Kimball, managing editor of *The New Criterion* and author of *Tenured Radicals* (Ivan R. Dee).

"Looking at these appalling advertisements for Indiana University's liberal arts program reminded me of P.T. Barnum's wicked habit of placing a large sign announcing 'This Way to the Egress!' in his circuses. What a perfect way to gull the credulous multitudes who came for the sword-swallower, the fat lady, and the dancing elephants. I doubt that these graphic monstrosities will be anywhere near as effective as Barnum's placards. But they have a similar intent,



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namely to sell the maximum number of people a bill of goods by misrepresenting a product. It is a nice question who will be more disappointed—or more thoroughly cheated—the circus-goers who find themselves suddenly outside the circus, or the unwary students who find themselves within it. At stake is something very serious indeed: namely, the dignity and integrity of liberal-arts programs in our colleges and universities. These advertisements are particularly tasteless, even by the low standards of the day. But a look around shows that many, many institutions are engaged in similar efforts to 'rebrand' the liberal arts programs in order to make them appealing to as many customers—I mean students—as possible. The question intelligent parents and students should be asking themselves is, 'Which way to the egress?'"

....

Philip Gossett, Dean of Humanities, the University of Chicago.

"The ads, while slick and funny, are also offensive. They put the burden of choosing a liberal arts major exclusively on the students, who are already caught between many different forces: parental worries for the future, a system of rewards at the university that puts salaries and facilities in the arts and sciences at the low end of the spectrum, and a society in which financial success is valued above all else. Furthermore, the ads won't fool anyone. After all, are people who think for a living necessarily going to be happier than their parents? As for midlife crises, look around at your university colleagues!"

....

John Guillory, professor of English at Harvard and author of *Cultural Capital* (Chicago).

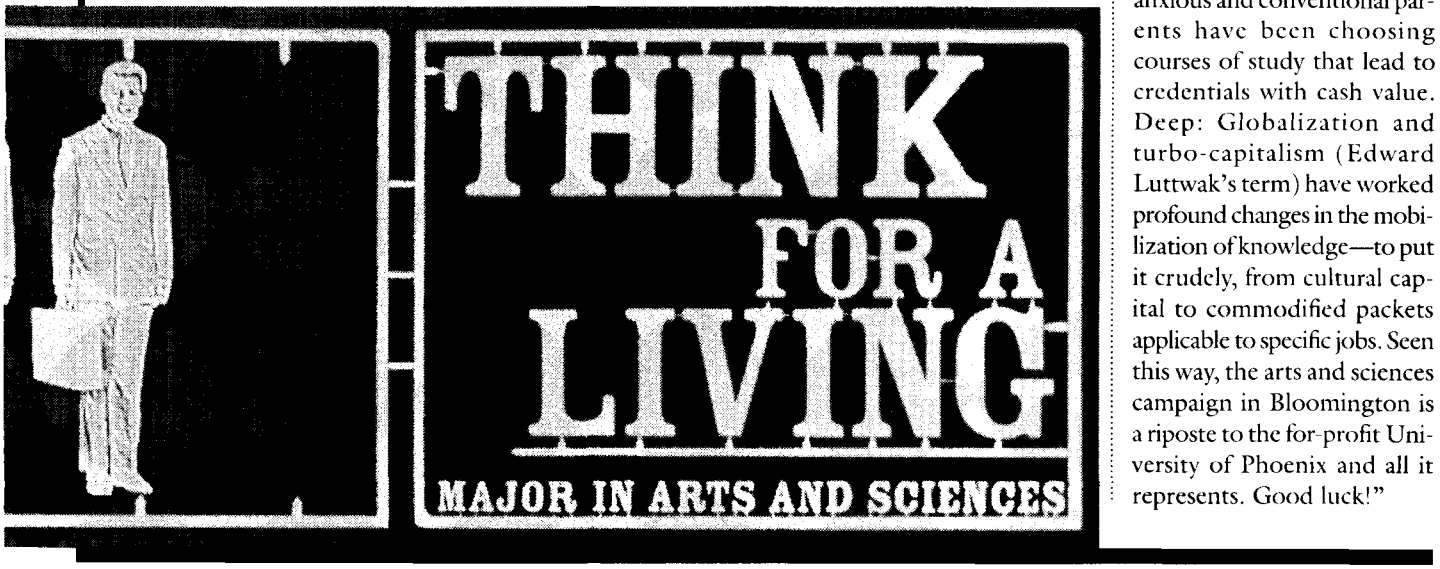
"The ads betray all too obviously the reason for the drop in arts and sciences enrollment, which has less to do with the appeal of the subjects themselves than with anxiety about the job market. Would that one could actually 'think for a living'! If students are motivated by job anxiety to seek programs which are also 'job titles,' the designers of the ad campaign know that making arts and sciences look cool is probably not in itself going to affect the motives of students. That's why they have to portray working life as a dreary grind, a default life that one has instead of the

utopian thinking for a living. In fact, many or most of the students who major in arts and sciences will go on to have just the same sorts of jobs as their peers who do not. The question in the minds of those contemplating arts and sciences is: What do future employers want from college graduates? Perhaps students are mistaken about this, and should be encouraged to major in subjects that interest them. Or perhaps—and this seems more likely— arts and sciences need to be sold to employers as much as to students. The ad campaign is clever in a scary sort of way. It works by pitting a fantasy about arts and sciences against the harsh reality of working life, without acknowledging students' anxieties about getting a decent job."

....

Richard Ohmann, professor emeritus of English at Wesleyan University and author of *Selling Culture* (Verso, 1996).

"Since the 1980s, display ads have sought to connect large, historically shaped needs and desires (individuality, freedom, love...) to specific consumer choices—a brand of cereal or toothpaste, or in this case a major in English or philosophy. For much longer, advocates of liberal arts education have hailed it as the foundation of wholeness, a reflective life, creativity. What's new here is so much professional talent being brought to bear on a one-time consumer choice at a single university. The explanation is both simple and deep. Simple: More students and their supposedly anxious and conventional parents have been choosing courses of study that lead to credentials with cash value. Deep: Globalization and turbo-capitalism (Edward Luttwak's term) have worked profound changes in the mobilization of knowledge—to put it crudely, from cultural capital to commodified packets applicable to specific jobs. Seen this way, the arts and sciences campaign in Bloomington is a riposte to the for-profit University of Phoenix and all it represents. Good luck!"



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HOW GERMAN IS IT?

IF NOTHING ELSE, THE ebonics debate has shown Americans that when it comes to regulating language, tempers are bound to flare. Meanwhile, the Germans are finding out that the regulation of spelling—how to reflect language on paper—can be just as contentious.

Back in the summer of 1996, representatives from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Liechtenstein signed an agreement instituting changes in the rules of German spelling that came to be known as the *Rechtschreibreform*. The first orthographic reform of the German language since 1901, its purpose was to simplify and standardize this sometimes bewildering language. While it appeared that the changes were well on their way by the fall (80 percent of students were learning the new rules, and the textbook industry had begun publishing new editions), a high-school German teacher named Friedrich Denk suddenly emerged at the Frankfurt Book Convention in October protesting the alterations. Denk's actions led to the presentation of the "Frankfurt Declaration," which declared that the reform "would waste millions of hours of work, encourage decades of confusion, injure the reputation of the German language and its literature both inside and outside Germany, and would cost billions of dollars." It was soon published with more than three hundred signatures, including those of some of Germany's most prominent writers, from Günter Grass to Hans Magnus Enzensberger. And it was not long before the debate moved to the courts, where the reform would be challenged for the next two years.

Critics of the reform made rounds on the interview circuit. Enzensberger, the sardonic and prolific essayist and pamphleteer, suggested that "this kind of 'reform' is, naturally, as superfluous as a goiter." (He later went so far as to call Konrad Duden, the German equivalent of Noah Webster, a *Sesselfurzer* or "chair farter.") The novelist Martin Walser declared that "orthographic norms are the blossoms of centralism—primary effect: more mistakes." And the writer Siegfried Lenz called the reform "expensive nonsense." At one point, Denk claimed that the Germans were experiencing "terrorism via orthography."

The position of the German state ministers of education is that the reform would fix "a series of nonsensical or flawed developments as well as sources of errors that have arisen over the course of time." For example, the verb *numerieren* (to number) would be spelled as *nummerieren* because it derives

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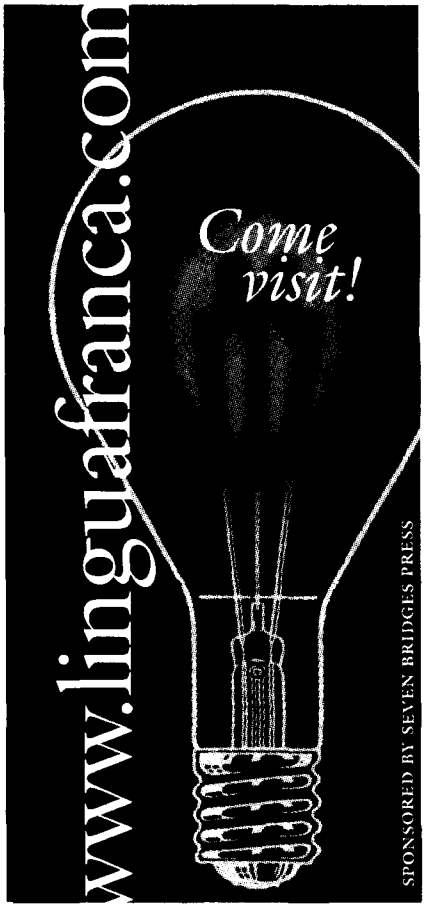

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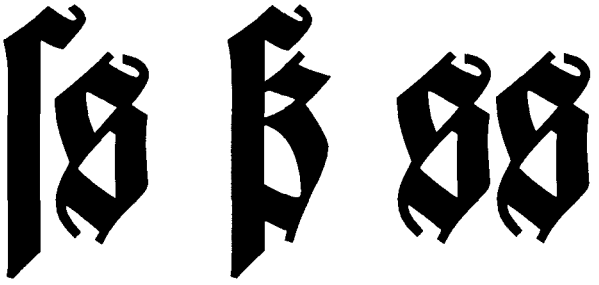
from the noun *Nummer*. Letters would also no longer be dropped when words are combined; oddities like *Schifffahrt* (boat ride) or *Teeei* (tea ball) would be correct. The letter *ß* would be written *ss* when following a short vowel, so *Fluß*, would become *Fluss*. And many foreign words would be germanized, turning *y*'s into *j*'s, and making excess *h*'s disappear. The Greek-derived *ph* would be used less. Spellings like *Spagetti*, *Fotografie*, and *Majonäse* would result. In all, the number of spelling rules governing the language would decrease from 212 to 112.

The purpose of any spelling reform should ideally be to make the written language easier to use. And indeed one report has claimed that spelling-test scores in Germany have improved in places where the reform has been adopted. But as Professor Wolfgang Ullrich Wurzel of the Center for General Language Research in Berlin asked in a recent article: "How do you determine what the simplicity and wieldiness of spelling really are?" The problem, as Wurzel explained in a subsequent interview, is that there are several organizing principles for orthography. For example, words can be spelled phonetically or etymologically. They can also be spelled homonymically—so that words that sound alike but have different meanings always have distinct spellings. Languages are organized according to the different principles applied in varying degrees: English spelling is largely etymological, whereas Chinese is almost perfectly homonymical, with a unique sign for every idea. But no principle is inherently simpler than any other.

Critics of the German reform argue that it is not clear which principles were given more weight and why; the results, they say, sometimes border on chaos. *Geographie* is still written with *ph*, but *Orthographie* is now *Orthografie*, *Philosophie* is *Filosofie*, and *Pornographie* has become *Pornografie*.



Under the German spelling reform, oddities like *Schifffahrt* and *Teeei* would be correct.

Worse, argues Professor Ewald Lang, a linguist at the Humboldt University in Berlin, the changes are "counterintuitive" because they are organized according to philological insights about which the average reader has little understanding and which only seem to increase exceptions. The German word *Gemse* (chamois), for example, is spelled *Gämse* according to the new rules because it originally derives from the medieval word *Gams*. But not all *e*'s are replaced by *ä*'s. The change clarifies the word's etymology at the cost of making its pronunciation uncertain. Being faithful to one principle seems to entail violating another. So if no one besides the specialist cares, and the criterion of simplification is not being met, why should the language be changed?

And this leads to another question, one asked by an editorial in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Germany's most respected newspaper: "To whom does the language belong anyway?" The German reform was organized by the Institute for the German Language in Mannheim, whose well-known French counterpart is the mighty Académie Française. England and the United States have no equivalent organization and don't seem to need one. Enzensberger has argued that writers and artists, not bureaucrats, academics, and philologists, should determine the shape of the language.

Such debates have troubled the Germans for a long time. As *Der Spiegel* put it, Germany is "das Land der Buchstäblichkeit"—the country of spelling. The first orthographic conference took place in 1876 in Dresden, shortly after Germany's unification under Bismarck. Even then the recommendations (to lose the *ß* and the silent *h*'s) caused alarm and were eventually rejected by Bismarck himself. Konrad Duden wrote his *Complete Orthographic Dictionary of the German Language* in 1880, and it soon became the standard. But German writers have always held spelling to be their special purview: Friedrich Hölderlin imagined that spelling *Atem* (breath) as *Othem* had theological significance; Martin Heidegger often used the medieval *Seyn* instead of *Sein* when he wrote about "being"; Stefan George never liked the *ß*; and even the Grimm brothers went their separate ways when Jakob started spelling everything based on medieval practices.

It is striking that the two major German orthographic reform movements have occurred around the time of the two German unifications. The debates about spelling have frequently reflected larger conflicts between traditionalists and modernizers during these periods of national self-definition. There is also an aesthetic component to the debate. The tendency of many writers to favor a more Gothic style of spelling reflects their belief that language is richer for the historical layers and associations that accompany the peculiarities of its spelling. By simplifying spelling according to the dictates of bureaucratic, or even philological, principles, they argue, you cheapen the art of writing.

But despite the protests of writers, it appears that spelling will continue to be what Enzensberger calls a "bureaucratic fetish." After two years of legal battles and public debate, the Federal Constitutional Court delivered a ruling on July 14 that finally cleared the way for the implementation of the changes. Almost. Although the *Rechtschreibreform* officially took effect on August 1, this fall the state of Schleswig-Holstein will hold a referendum on whether or not to adopt the changes. By most estimates, the voters will reject the reform. And if it fails in one state, some fear that the rest of the German *Länder* will follow suit—and that Germany will become a single nation divided by a common language.

ANDREW PIPER

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BUBBLE TROUBLE

REMEMBER BIOSPHERE 2? The utopian venture, the brainchild of New Age environmentalist John Allen and oil billionaire Ed Bass, was a popular object of ridicule in the media and the scientific community when it was unveiled in the Arizona desert in 1991. In 1993 the experimental ecosystem was abandoned to the ants and cockroaches who were its only happy residents. Its air had become unbreathable, its soil contaminated, and its backers were at each others' throats. But today Biosphere 2 is up and running again, and this time it's no joke: It's the western campus of Columbia University's Earth Institute.

The road to academic legitimacy has been long and circuitous. In 1974 Allen convinced Bass that mankind's salvation lay in colonizing Mars. A decade and a half and at least $150 million later, the prototype Martian colony was ready. With great fanfare, eight "biospherians" entered the glass, steel, and concrete structure on September 26, 1991, expecting to remain inside for two years. They lasted fifteen months.

Critics soon charged that the project was bad science, a publicity stunt, or both. As the sphere's internal environment deteriorated, the press discovered that food and air were being smuggled in.

In 1996, however, Columbia took over the project, which Bass still bankrolls. Columbia combined its Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, New York, with the slightly renamed Biosphere 2 Center to create the new Earth Institute, headed by chemist William Harris (lured from the NSF). Columbia runs undergraduate programs at the Biosphere, and researchers from as far away as Shanghai and Nepal use the complex's unique enclosures to study rainforest ecology, coral reef systems, agricultural strategies, and the greenhouse effect.

If the biosphere is being resurrected, so too is one of its early proponents—or at least his dog. In its earlier incarnation, the biosphere briefly involved John Sperling, founder of the controversial, for-profit University of Phoenix. More recently, however, Sperling has made the news in connection with another ambitious scientific undertaking. *The Dallas Morning News* has identified Sperling as the anonymous donor who gave Texas A&M University $2.3 million for genetic research. Sperling set just one condition: that the university clone his dog Missy. Sperling has denied the assertion. But the paper, having examined Texas tax records and California dog tags, has determined that Sperling's mixed husky and A&M's are one and the same. But not for long.

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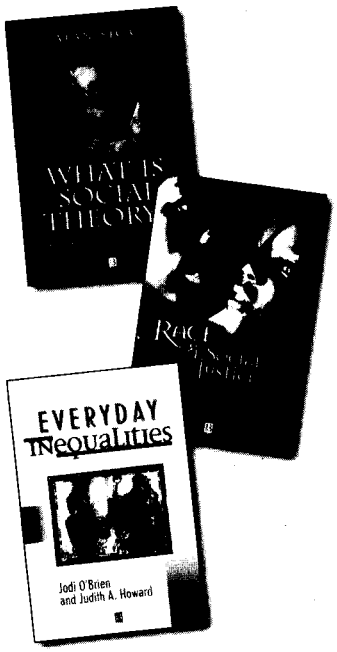

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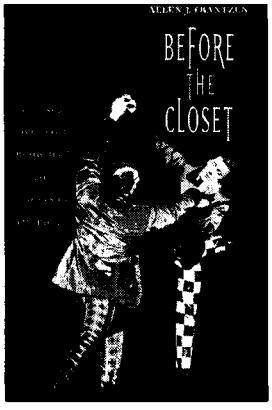

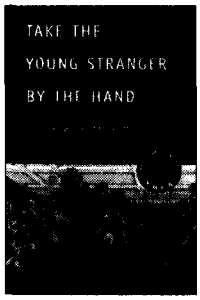

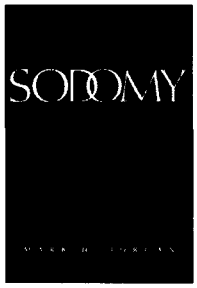

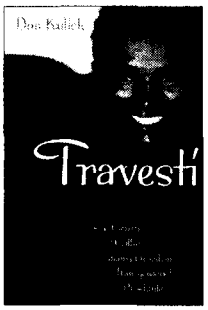

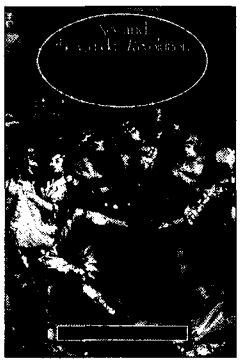

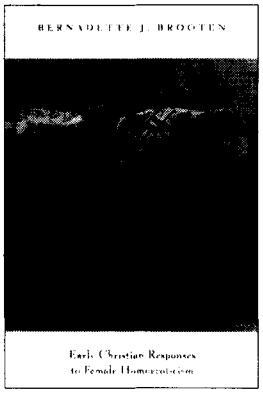

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Breakthrough *Books*

WE ASKED EIGHT EXPERTS TO COMMENT ON THE BEST RECENT BOOKS ON **THE HOME**.

Witold Rybczynski, professor of urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *The Most Beautiful House in the World* (Viking, 1990).

"There are many books about houses—how to design them, build them, decorate them—but 'home' is an elusive subject. In ***Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*** (Norton, 1996), **D.J. Waldie** describes how, as a young boy in 1946, he moved with his family to Lakewood, California, one of the country's first large planned suburban communities. He writes evocatively of the experience of growing up and living in a place where everything was standardized, homogeneous, and brand-new. If that sounds depressing, it isn't—it's the way most Americans choose to live. Ordinary sights were also the chosen subject of the late **John Brinckerhoff Jackson**. A posthumous anthology, ***Landscape in Sight: Looking at America*** (Yale, 1997), contains several wonderful essays in what is best described as domestic anthropology, including a paean to mobile homes and an investigation of the humble garage. Vintage Jackson."

....

Rochelle Gurstein, professor of history at the Bard Graduate Center and author of *The Repeal of Reticence: America's Cultural and Legal Struggles Over Free Speech, Obscenity, Sexual Liberation, and Modern Art* (Hill and Wang, 1996).

"The best chronicle of the home and domestic life in antebellum America—and of its municipal buildings, churches, museums, theaters, cities, and towns—is still **Frances Trollope**'s 1832 ***Domestic Manners of the Americans*** (Brandywine Press, 1993), edited by John Lauritz Larson. Trollope's unsparing account of her life with people she found utterly lacking in charm and refinement and of rooms 'devoid of nearly all the accommodation that Europeans conceive necessary to decency and comfort' was an immediate success in England, while it was denounced in America and its author burned in effigy. In addition to her vivid descriptions of the New World, Trollope's analysis of the ill effects of the separation of the sexes—the growing feminization and trivialization of Protestantism as well as the impoverished state of conversation, wherein men spoke only about politics or business while women gossiped about fashion or recipes—remains an essential resource for those trying to understand the culture of domesticity and evangelical Protestantism."

....

Monica F. Cohen, an independent scholar based in New York City and author of *Professional Domesticity in the Victorian Novel: Women, Work and Home* (Cambridge, 1998).

"**Arlie Russell Hochschild** has explored the conflict-ridden merging of home and work in late-twentieth-century American culture. In ***The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*** (Metropolitan, 1997), this accomplished sociologist investigates a Fortune 500 company lauded for its 'family-friendly' policies. When scrutinized, however, it would seem that families working for this company spend little time together: They eat dinner to the shriek of arriving faxes and the hum of home computers registering e-mail missives, as the time between dinner and bedtime turns into an anxious struggle to manufacture even a semblance of domesticity. Hochschild's thesis—that working parents live in perpetual time debt, owing their children time for which there is no substitute and no compensation—provides a critical framework for a myriad of nuanced personal stories about smart, caring, and committed parents facing difficult circumstances."

....

Dolores Hayden, professor of architecture, urbanism, and American Studies at Yale University and author of *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life* (Norton, 1984).

"Vernacular dwellings hold our most personal, intimate memories, as well as the larger traces of the history of social life. In ***Home: American Writers Remember Rooms of Their Own***, edited by **Sharon Sloan Fiffer** and **Steve Fiffer** (Pantheon, 1995), Jane Smiley, Gish Jen, and Esmerelda Santiago explore the bathroom, garage, and closet, while Bailey White tackles the garden and Alex Kotlowitz the boys' bedroom. There are eighteen mini-memoirs in all, forming a composite house and building a delightful book for general readers as well as an evocation of spatial meanings for architects designing new housing. In a similar vein, **D.J. Waldie**'s ***Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir***, illustrated with William Garnett's aerial photographs of Lakewood, California, in the 1950s, evokes the largest suburb of its time, spanning its personal meanings for a boy growing up and its public meanings for a man who is now a town official, still living in the same tract house."

....

John Emmeus Davis, a national community-development consultant based in Burlington, Vermont, and editor of *The Affordable City: Towards a Third Sector Housing Policy* (Temple, 1994).

"Home happens in a particular place: within the housing that contains it, within a community that surrounds it. Home is more than its container or surroundings, of course, but the inadequacy of either can make home a precarious entity. **Michael Stone**, in ***Shelter Poverty: New Ideas***

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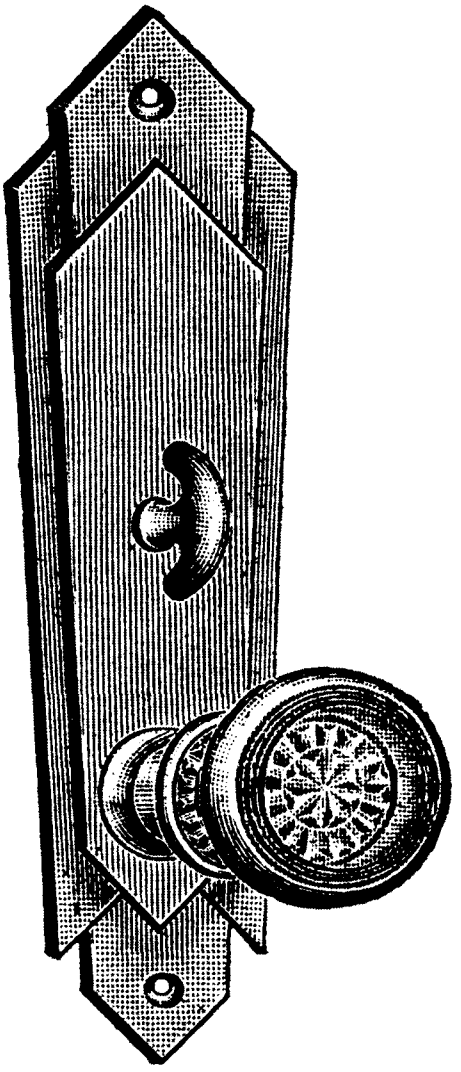
on Housing Affordability (Temple, 1993), examines redlining and other problems with the housing-finance system in America and proposes a host of progressive, permanent solutions. A comprehensive introduction to the multidisciplined world of housing studies is provided through the five hundred A–Z entries of ***The Encyclopedia of Housing***, edited by **Willem van Vliet** (Sage, 1998). Improving housing is only one aspect of rebuilding community, however, a lesson brought home by **Peter Medoff** and **Holly Sklar** in ***Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood*** (South End Press, 1994)."

....

Gwendolyn Wright, professor of architecture and history at Columbia University and author of *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873–1913* (Chicago, 1980).

"Scholars have recently begun to balance their indictments of domestic drudgery with an exploration of how many people manage to create a positive environment in their homes. This subtlety characterizes the new English translation of the second volume of **Michel de Certeau**'s ***The Practice of Everyday Life***. With ***Living and Cooking*** (Minnesota, 1998), de Certeau's panegyric to everyday human actions has been relocated to the familiar terrain of the home and the residential neighborhood. De Certeau eloquently portrays the conversion of the routine and repetitive acts of domestic life into experiences of creativity and pleasure. A similar combination of critique and appreciation characterizes **Dell Upton**'s compact overview, ***Architecture in the United States*** (Oxford, 1998), another ode to creativity in ordinary lives as well as in high art, which opens with a chapter on Americans' complex obsession with homes—their own and everyone else's—ranging from our fetish for efficient kitchen cabinets to our longing for distinctive house façades."



....

Ruth Brent, professor of environmental design at the University of Missouri-Columbia and co-editor of *Popular American Housing: A Reference Guide* (Greenwood, 1995).

"The notorious mismatch between many older people and their housing, which too often is designed on a medical model and not a residential one, should inspire us to seek a better theoretical understanding of aging and environment. The majority of theories that guide housing research, however, were devised twenty-five years ago. Despite increasing demand due to more people living longer, the housing plight continues. **Rick J. Scheidt** and **Paul G. Windley**'s ***Environment and Aging Theory: A Focus on Housing*** (Greenwood, 1998), addresses this issue, featuring seven prominent gerontological housing authors who help us see the contemporary and dynamic connection between aging and the places older adults call home. Stephen Golant, for instance, penetrates the changing nature of an older person's shelter and care setting, and Robert Rubinstein provides a new perspective on the phenomenology of housing for older people."

....

Patricia R. Zimmermann, professor of cinema and photography at Ithaca College and author of *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Films* (Indiana, 1995).

"Home is where old and new technologies mingle. For the last century, amateur film and video-making shaped imaginary representations of home. **Lynn Hershman Leeson**'s anthology ***Clicking In: Hot Links to a Digital Culture*** (Bay Press, 1996), provocatively unpacks how digitality—the Internet, CD-ROM, medical imaging, and multimedia, among others—has turned the home into a pit stop for global interconnectivity in a way that amateur movies never could. Cracking open the unmapped electronic frontier, the essays in *Clicking In*, from the likes of feminist Sadie Plant and superhacker R.U. Sirius, render the corporate fantasies of Clinton's information superhighway dull and obsolete. Performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña proposes 'brownifying' and 'spanglishizing' the white, English-only Net, while theorists Arthur and Marilouise Kroker warn that computers bunker us in and dumb us down—at home."

JOHN PALATTELLA

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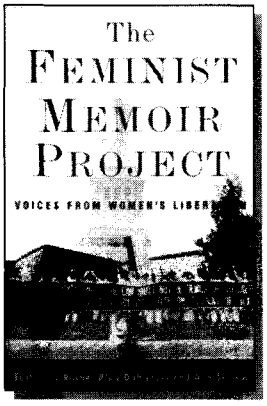
Critical New Perspectives in Women's Studies



The Feminist Memoir Project

Voices from Women's Liberation

Edited by Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Ann Snitow

"**The Feminist Memoir Project** has put back on the historical record dozens of urgent voices that have been overlooked by the standard histories of the 1960s and were on the verge of being lost forever. What a fascinating, vital—and vitally important—book!"
—**Katha Pollitt**

The voices of the Second Wave of Feminism—including Kate Millett, Alix Kates Shulman, Vivian Gornick, Michele Wallace, Joan Nestle, Jo Freeman, and many other activist women—weave a fascinating history of what it felt like to live through and contribute to the massive social movement that transformed the nation. These 38 writers, among the thousands to jump-start feminism in our time, give voice to the spirit, the drive, and the claims of the Women's Liberation Movement they helped shape.

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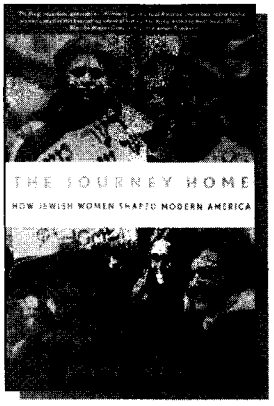

The Journey Home

How Jewish Women Shaped Modern America

by Joyce Antler

"Profoundly researched and vividly written, **The Journey Home** is thrilling, important, generative. . . . Wonderful portraits of America's most fascinating Jewish Women comprise this heartening weave of history, literature, entertainment, and politics."
—**Blanche Wiesen Cook**

Throughout the twentieth century, American Jewish women have made history, challenging the political and cultural constraints facing women in every aspect of American life. Interweaving social history with lively biographical portraits, Joyce Antler profiles women ranging from Emma Goldman, Sophie Tucker, and Golda Meir to Bella Abzug, Gertrude Stein, and Wendy Wasserstein, examining the political conflicts and personal tensions that have animated their lives as they made their mark on American society.

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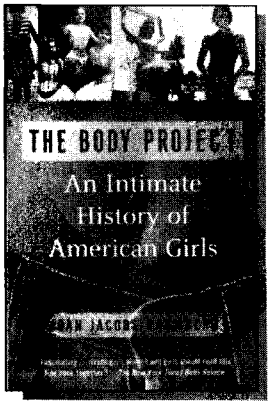

The Body Project

An Intimate History of American Girls

by Joan Jacobs Brumberg

"**The Body Project** is an extraordinary culmination of a decade of historical and contemporary research on American girlhood. . . . Brumberg is masterful at combining historical archival scholarship with lively insights from past and recent personal diaries and memoirs."
—**Alice S. Rossi, Ph.D.**, Harriet Martineau Professor Emerita of Sociology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Girls today are in crisis—and this book shows why. Drawing on a vast array of lively historical sources, unpublished diaries by adolescent girls, and photographs that conjure up memories of the past, **The Body Project** chronicles how growing up in a female body has changed over the past century and why that experience is more difficult today than ever before.

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Inside*Publishing*

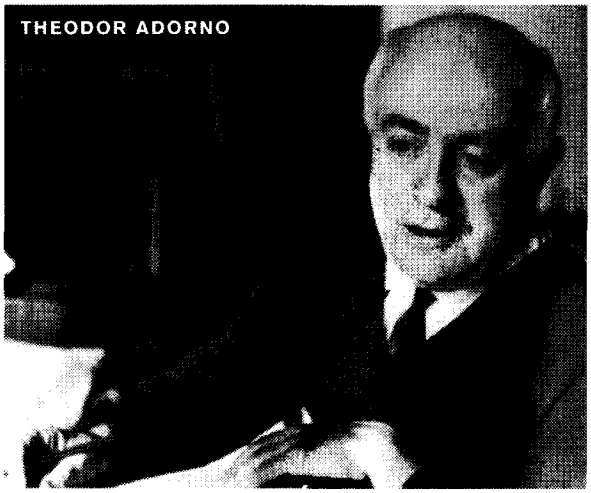
CRITICAL THEORY AT THE BARRICADES

ON APRIL 22, 1969, SHORTLY AFTER BEGINNING a lecture in his course on dialectical thought before an audience of nearly one thousand students at the University of Frankfurt, the eminent Frankfurt School sociologist and Marxist cultural critic Theodor W. Adorno found himself in an unusual situation. A student in one of the back rows interrupted him, demanding that he engage in "self-criticism." Another student silently walked up to the blackboard and wrote the following words: "He who only allows dear Adorno to rule will uphold capitalism his entire life." After Adorno told the class that they would have five minutes to decide if his lecture should continue, three female students dressed in leather jackets rushed the podium. They showered him with roses and tulips, exposed their breasts, and tried repeatedly to kiss him. Incensed and humiliated, Adorno stormed out of the lecture hall.

This incident, which came to be known as the *Busenaktion* ("breast action"), has never figured with much prominence in American studies of the Frankfurt School. Americans are far more apt to think of the leading figures of Critical Theory—Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and others—languishing in exile in New York and southern California during the Nazi period, or of the eclectic blend of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and sociology that characterized their thought. Their work is famous for its mandarinism, its abstraction, and—especially in the case of Adorno—its uncompromising commitment to the independence of critical thought and high art. Yet in Germany, on the thirtieth anniversary of the student revolts of 1968, the Frankfurt School is also remembered for its vexed role in the volatile, sometimes violent political upheavals of the 1960s.

The *Busenaktion* was just one of many confrontations between the increasingly "praxis"-oriented German New Left and the theoreticians who had been its mentors. The turbulent evolution of this relationship is the subject of Wolfgang Kraushaar's elaborate three-volume work, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail, 1946–1995* (The Frankfurt School and the Student Movement: From the Message in the Bottle to the Molotov Cocktail, 1946–1995), published in Germany this past spring by Rogner & Bernhard. A political scientist at Hamburg's Institute of Social Research and a bona fide '68er, Kraushaar has produced a painstaking and lavish collection. It consists of a meticulously detailed historical overview, an extensive compendium of documents and photographs, and a collection of retrospective essays with titles like "Dialogues on Theory and Praxis" and "The Oedipal Complex of the '68ers."

The story that these volumes tell ends on a sorry note. Adorno and Horkheimer, the grand old men of the German intellectual left, saw their lectures heckled, their institute occupied, and their own students, notably Adorno's protégé Hans-Jürgen Krahl, turn against them. In a moment of despair during the student occupation of the institute in January 1969, Adorno called the police. Students were outraged at his betrayal. "Adorno as institution is dead," declared a flyer distributed by a radical group of sociology students in April of that year.



THEODOR ADORNO

COURTESY ROGNER & BERNHARD

"Adorno as institution is dead," declared a flyer distributed by a radical group of sociology students.

Adorno himself would survive just another few months. He died of a heart attack in Switzerland on August 6, 1969, at the age of sixty-five. Six weeks earlier, he had written to Marcuse of his "extreme depression" and of his revulsion at the fascist overtones he sensed in the tactics and demands of the students.

Yet relations between leftist German students and their mentors had not always been so antagonistic. Kraushaar begins in the late 1940s, when Horkheimer and Adorno, the two central figures from the prewar incarnation of the Frankfurt-based Institut für Sozialforschung, returned to

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Germany from their American exile. Their "critical sociology," which fused the insights of Weber with those of Marx and Hegel, along with their trenchant critique of fascism, attracted students looking for alternatives to the positivism and conservatism that dominated German intellectual life.

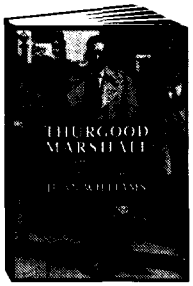
When Horkheimer first returned to Germany, originally as a guest professor at the University of Frankfurt in 1948 and then as the chair of sociology and philosophy in 1949, his students received him warmly. From the outset, he and Adorno assumed the role of spokesmen for "the reeducation of German youth." Because they were left-wing intellectuals and returned Jewish refugees who had been personally affected by the horrors of National Socialism, the two were less suspect to radical students than instructors who had remained in Germany under Hitler. Both found that German students took to their ideas, and both recognized promising signs of intellectual advancement among their disciples. "They are learning to express themselves and to have the freedom to say what they believe," announced Horkheimer in a Frankfurt-based student newspaper in 1960. Several of their early students and associates, Jürgen Habermas among them, would go on to become leading intellectuals.

As the political climate shifted in the mid-1960s, however, the very students who had been vocal and independent just a few years earlier became disenchanted with the Olympian detachment of their mentors. In 1964, under the charismatic leadership of Rudi Dutschke, the radical organization Subversive Aktion undertook a series of confrontations with the elder spiritual leaders. Dutschke was also largely responsible for the spread of anti-Establishment activism within the growing Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (Union of German Socialist Students, or SDS), which demanded the total transformation of German society. His group challenged the conservatism of the Adenauer administration and declared that the denazification of West German society and its institutions had been halfhearted and ineffectual. The rise of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam movements on the other side of the Atlantic further inspired the radicalism of these students. In a 1967 debate, Dutschke dismissed Habermas's thought as outdated; Habermas responded by calling Dutschke's unbridled activism "left-wing fascism."

At the same time that Adorno was working on such rarefied theoretical works as *Negative Dialectics* (1966) and *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), the SDS was operating under the banner "Enlightenment through Action," and engaging in demonstrations: against the Vietnam War, against repressive university

Portraits in History and Humanity

Thurgood Marshall
American Revolutionary
by Juan Williams



The bestselling author of *Eyes on the Prize* has written a detailed biography of this prominent American lawyer and Supreme Court justice. Thurgood Marshall was a true revolutionary, the guiding intelligence behind the civil rights movement, and the source of the nation's social transformation in the twentieth century. This is the definitive biography of one of the greatest Americans of all time. *(Times Books) hardcover, 20% discounted price: $22.00**

The AmericanHeritage® History of the United States
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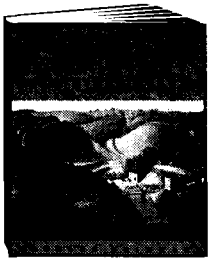

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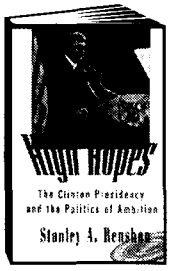
High Hopes
The Clinton Presidency and the Politics of Ambition
by Stanley A. Renshon



In this perceptive psychological portrait of Clinton and his presidency, Stanley A. Renshon investigates whether this leader has demonstrated the judgement, vision, character and skill to face domestic and international challenges. He reveals a Bill Clinton whose capacity for political success is often undermined by the very traits for which many praise him. *(Routledge) paperback, 20% discounted price: $14.39**

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reforms, and against the right-wing German media monopoly. The elder professors were not amused. Like such American Old Guard leftists as Irving Howe, who expressed distaste for Tom Hayden and the American Students for a Democratic Society, the Frankfurt School veterans were disturbed by the youthful disrespect of liberal institutions and disgusted by what they saw as a dogmatic faith in the primacy of action. "I established a theoretical model of thought," Adorno remarked. "How could I have suspected that people would want to implement it with Molotov cocktails?"

But members of the student movement did not abandon the work of their elders altogether. They circulated pirated copies of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947); they rediscovered Georg Lukács and the Marxist texts of Walter Benjamin; and above all they turned their attention to the writings of Marcuse. His *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), already influential in America, appeared in German translation in 1967. The year before, Marcuse, who had remained in American exile, visited Germany. At the University of Frankfurt, he gave the keynote lecture at a student-sponsored conference on Vietnam, an event at which more than two thousand students were present and which led to mass antiwar demonstrations. Already known for his support of the American student movement, and for his mentorship of Angela Davis, Marcuse drew instant sympathy from the German students and formed a lasting friendship with Dutschke. In his celebrated essay "Repressive Tolerance" (published in German in 1966), Marcuse declared that in the case of insurrections among the oppressed, "no third party, and least of all the educator and intellectual, has the right to preach them abstention."

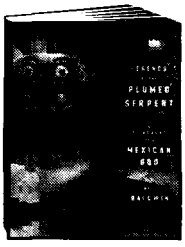
"How could I have suspected that people would want to implement my ideas with Molotov cocktails?" asked Adorno.

Unsurprisingly, Horkheimer and Adorno were suspicious of Marcuse's engagement with the student rebels. A firm believer that science (*Wissenschaft*) and culture (*Kultur*) should be autonomous spheres, free of any direct involvement with politics, Adorno declared that he would remain a "theoretical human being," unwilling to draw practical consequences from his ideas. "If I were to give practical advice in the way

Legends of the Plumed Serpent

Biography of a Mexican God

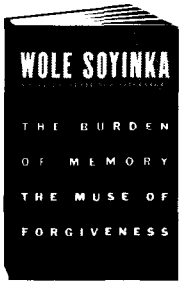
by Neil Baldwin



Visualized as part bird and part snake and also in human form, Quetzalcoatl has claimed Mesoamerican imagination for 5000 years. This unusual biography of a myth tracks the Plumed Serpent's life from pre-Colombian agricultural diety, to legendary ruler, to messiah, to native identity symbol, to revolutionary standard-bearer to modernist icon. *(Perseus) hardcover, 20% discounted price: $28.00**

The Burden of Memory, The Muse of Forgiveness

by Wole Soyinka



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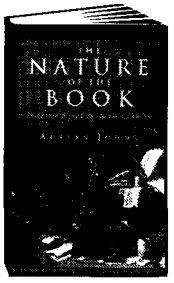
The Nature of the Book

Print and Knowledge in the Making

by Adrian Johns



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that Herbert Marcuse has to a certain extent done," Adorno remarked in a 1969 interview in *Der Spiegel*, "it would be at the cost of my own productivity."

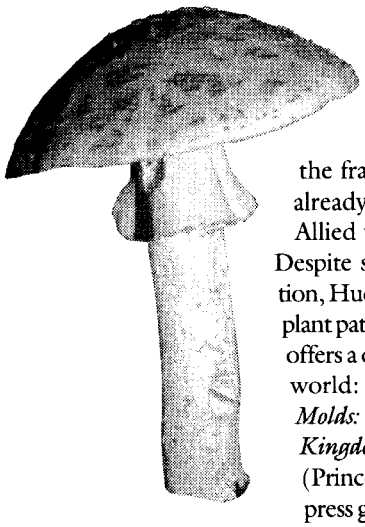
Although the students vilified him for such quietism, Adorno's view of them was more ambivalent. On his deathbed he dictated a final letter to Marcuse, hoping to prevent the gulf between them from growing any wider. His words struck a remarkably conciliatory note: "I am the last to underestimate the merits of the student movement," he insisted. "It has disrupted the smooth transition to a totally administered world"—the world whose coming his own work so passionately decried.

In 1959, in his lecture "What Does Coming to Terms With the Past Mean?"—a key text for Germany's postwar confrontations with its National Socialist legacy—Adorno had argued that the most urgent task facing postwar Germany was the eradication of those aspects of German culture and society that had enabled fascism to take root. In a different way, the German '68ers saw themselves as carrying out that very task. Of course, the wounds of the past, inflamed by the rise of terrorism (led by guerrilla groups like the Red Army Faction), in the 1970s, may not yet be healed. But now, thanks to Kraushaar, participants in this generational conflict can begin to come to terms with their own past.

NOAH ISENBERG

FUNGUS AMONG US

TO HEAR GEORGE W. HUDLER TELL IT, IT WAS not the Allies who won World War I—it was fungus. *Phytophthora infestans*, the fungus that had earlier putrefied the Irish potato crop, infested German tubers in 1915 and 1916, starving more than 700,000 people. The Germans were unable to stop the infestation because the copper reserves necessary for the production of fungicides were tied up in war materials. Hudler concludes that "by the time the United States and Britain entered the fray in 1917, blighted potatoes had already so weakened German resolve that Allied victory was assured."



Despite such sallies into historical explanation, Hudler is not a historian. He is a Cornell plant pathologist who has written a book that offers a decidedly fungus-centric view of the world: *Magical Mushrooms, Mischievous Molds: The Remarkable Story of the Fungus Kingdom and Its Impact on Human Affairs* (Princeton). How did a leading university press get interested in mold and decay? On a visit to Cornell in 1993, Princeton University Press editor Jack Repcheck picked up a copy of a student publication ranking and describing recommended courses. The write-up of Hudler's introductory mycology class caught Repcheck's eye: a course on fungus that attracted three to four hundred students a year? (In fact, other universities, for example Penn State, have launched similar courses in order to attract more students into their plant pathology programs.) To Repcheck, the course's contagious appeal suggested a book.

Magical Mushrooms is Princeton's latest crack at popular science publishing. Says Repcheck proudly, "There are no other trade books on fungus." Its author is a man with a passion. Recalling the first time he looked at fungal cells under a microscope, Hudler writes, "At that moment, which is as vivid in my mind today as it was so many years ago, my life took on new meaning. I was completely captivated by the fungi.... Somehow, I knew, I would find a way to craft a career around them."

As the fungi's popularizer, Hudler has his work cut out for him. Commonly associated with rot and contamination, the fungus kingdom's inhabitants are legion, ranging from mushrooms and the shelflike protrusions one finds on tree stumps, to mildew and the green fur that grows on forgotten leftovers. Yeasts are fungi; so are athlete's foot and lichens. Not to be confused with plants, which generate their own food through photosynthesis, fungi have a unique and distinctive feeding pattern: They digest their food *before* it enters their bodies. Fungi pull off this neat trick by producing enzymes that uncouple the chemical bonds in organic molecules, reducing matter to its primary atomic elements. In this sense, fungi are the ecosystem's recyclers and decayers, saving us, Hudler rhapsodizes, from drowning in a sea of dead plant and animal matter.

Perhaps predictably, an organism that has the power to unbraid organic molecules and to reduce once living—sometimes still living—matter to primordial slime has cut a reckless swath through history. The infamous ergot fungus, a common parasite of grain crops like rye and barley, afflicted medieval peasants with symptoms so horrible that they were often attributed to bewitchment: The fungus's toxins, known as ergot alkaloids, caused convulsions, hallucinations, and the illusion of ants crawling on the skin. At times, they so reduced blood flow to certain parts of the body that affected limbs went numb, emitted a terrible odor, and fell off. Indeed, the bewitched of Germany and France

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in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries may very well have been victims not of demonic possession or mass hysteria but of *Claviceps purpurea*, the deadly ergot fungus. Citing historian Mary Matossian, Hudler argues that ergot poisoning, particularly toxic to adolescents and children, may have been largely responsible for the bewitchment of the youth in Salem, Massachusetts, many of whom were reported to suffer convulsions, paralysis, dementia, and the occasional loss of a limb. Tree ring analyses from the area support the theory that the witch trials took place during years when the climate was most favorable for ergot growth—and even livestock in the Salem area exhibited ergotism symptoms, from dry gangrene to the failure to produce milk.

Of course, the consumption of toxic fungi is not always involuntary. One ergot alkaloid that has staked out a place for itself in twentieth-century history is lysergic acid, a component of LSD-25, which was derived from *C. purpurea* by the Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann in 1943. And then there is the case of the Siberian tribesmen. Their use of the hallucinogenic *Amanita muscaria*, or fly agaric mushroom, produced muscular contractions followed by dizziness, vomiting, and stupor. And yet, according to eighteenth-century Swedish traveler Philip Johann von Strahlenberg, these tribesmen were so eager for the intoxicant that they would drink the urine of those who had consumed it. Hudler also notes that fly agaric affected the local reindeer so strongly that "on more than one occasion, an *A. muscaria* inebriant would step outside to relieve himself and be trampled to death by reindeer trying to get at his urine." Some mycologists and mycophiles speculate that fly agaric is actually the soma of Hindu myth—and the subject of 120 hymns in the Rig Veda.

Casting his gaze further back in time, Hudler builds a case for the role of fungus in the ancient Greek festival known as the Greater Mysteries of Eleusis. Initiates, sworn to secrecy, were said to drink a purple potion of meal, water, and mint, called *kykeon*, which produced visions (along with some shuddering, sweating, and

"There are no other trade books on fungus," says a Princeton editor.

FROM RIGHT TO LEFT

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terror). When water is contaminated with ergot sclerotia, it turns purple; and Hudler believes the intensity of *kykeon* intoxication suggests ergot more than it does wine. He is clearly delighted by the possibilities, citing the work of Plato, Sophocles, Euripides, and Homer: genius—or fungus?

As Hudler sees it, monotheistic religions are also indebted to the fungi. Renegade spores may well have colonized the Israelites' grain stock, forcing the tribes of Israel to migrate to Egypt, where they were enslaved—and the rest is Old Testament history. Fortunately, as these same Israelites trekked through the Middle Eastern desert, they were saved from starvation by manna falling from the sky. Now what could that have been? *Aspicilia esculenta*, Hudler suggests: the manna lichen.

While he wouldn't dream of claiming that all fungi are manna, Hudler's view of the impact of fungi on human affairs is decidedly upbeat, if not triumphalist. After disquisitions on the destructive powers of the fungi that cause Dutch elm disease and chestnut blight, parasitize grain crops, and cause dangerous diseases, or mycoses, in humans, Hudler hastens to the kingdom's defense: "Let me assure you that for all the problems the fungi have caused, they have also extended our lives and made them far more enjoyable." To buttress this point, he marshals yeasts, edible and hallucinogenic mushrooms, and—not least—antibiotics. Many fungi protect their food supply by producing toxins that are deadly to marauding bacteria; hence, antibiotics, a by-product of some *Penicillium* molds. Hudler's version of the penicillin story is replete with colorful details: The Oxford scientists who were attempting to purify the antibiotic at the outbreak of World War II dusted the linings of their clothes with mold spores so that they could continue their research even if their laboratory burned to the ground. When the team relocated to Peoria, Illinois, it employed a woman who became known as "Moldy Mary" to peruse supermarket shelves for new mold specimens. The strain generally used in antibiotic production today, *Penicillium chrysogenum*, was first spotted by this envoy on a cantaloupe.

An impressive accomplishment. But Hudler cannot end his book there—and say nothing of wood decay. It is, of course, fungus that reduces sound wood "to an amorphous mass of organic rubble." Proclaims Hudler almost gleefully, "Even the once mighty British navy was no match for the fungi."

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HIT PARADE

LIST MAKING HAS BECOME AN AMERICAN obsession. The past year alone produced high-profile inventories of the top one hundred American movies, the all-time best TV shows, and the century's best novels. But as the ongoing uproar over these exercises reveals, the one thing more popular than making lists is arguing about them. And in ego- and ideology-driven academia, the acts of inclusion and exclusion on which list making depends are particularly fraught.

Thus, when U. Mass-Amherst sociologist Dan Clawson asked his twenty-eight co-editors at *Contemporary Sociology* to nominate the most influential books of the past twenty-five years, he was prepared for battle. "There's a sociology Old Guard that still wants to draw a tight circle, with many of the most interesting ideas and approaches excluded from the discipline," he says. "We knew that these people would not like the list."

That might be putting it mildly. After Clawson published his preliminary findings in the May 1996 issue of *Contemporary Sociology,* the journal was deluged with long and detailed critiques. As a result, when Clawson expanded the list into a full-length volume, he decided to publish some of the debate it sparked as well. *Required Reading: Sociology's Most Influential Works*, published last month by the University of Massachusetts Press, is a rumbling argument of a book. Clawson's canon is an eclectic one, weighted more toward left-wing politics and interdisciplinary work than toward number crunching and model building. In all, there are seventeen chosen titles, each one allotted its own essay. But of the selected authors, only eight are card-carrying sociologists. Little wonder that when Clawson's list first appeared, many in the discipline uttered an audible cry of protest.

As Clawson notes in his introduction, some critics objected to the very idea of list making, worrying that any list at all would draw too sharp a line between acceptable and unacceptable works. Others were more concerned by the particular list that Clawson and company had produced, noting its neglect of quantitative work and its emphasis on social theory, historical argument, feminism, and public intellectuals. One of the louder harrumphs came from Gerald Marwell, Richard T. Ely Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and former editor of *American Sociological Review* (*ASR*). "Is this how we want to be remembered?" Marwell demanded. "As a discipline dominated by Geertz and Said and the Boston Women's Collective?" After all, Clifford Geertz is an anthropologist, Edward Said is a literary critic, and the Boston Women's Health Book Collective's best-selling *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973) was written by and for feminist activists rather than social scientists. The list, Marwell suggested, looks more like an admission of failure than an audacious rejection of disciplinary blinders.

Marwell's most damning charge is that the list was more or less improvised. The project "paid little attention to clarifying method or objective," he argues, leaving it up to individual editors and the editor in chief to determine what was meant by "influential." The fact that many of those consulted received

SOCIOLOGY'S GREATEST HITS 1971–1996

Gary Becker, *A Treatise on the Family,* 2d ed. (1991)

Boston Women's Health Book Collective, *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book by and for Women* (1973)

Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972)

Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (1974)

Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (1978)

David Featherman and Robert Hauser, *Opportunity and Change* (1978)

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977)

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (1973)

Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983)

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977)

Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980* (1984)

Norman Nie, Dale H. Bent, and C. Hadlai Hull, *SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (1970)

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Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978)

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (1979)

Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978)

Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 1 (1974)

William J. Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (1978)

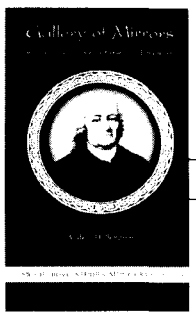
their Ph.D.'s in the late 1970s leads Marwell to conclude that the list reflects the preoccupations of one very particular "sociological cohort." A more scientific approach, he writes, would involve using the *Social Science Citation Index* to generate statistics on the number of times a particular book is mentioned in "leading journals," such as *ASR* and the *American Journal of Sociology*. Not surprisingly, when Marwell takes a look at the numbers, he finds little or no correlation between inclusion on the Clawson list and heavy citation in these major disciplinary journals.

Marwell admits to being jealous of not having dreamed up the idea when he was the editor of *ASR* in the early 1990s. Still, his real discomfort, it seems, is the manner in which a younger generation of scholars has wielded its power. Certainly he would be unlikely to endorse University of North Carolina sociologist Rachel Rosenfeld's definition of sociology as "a field in which one could justify doing anything," which has a vaguely 1960s let-it-all-hang-out feel. In response, Charles Lemert, a sociologist at Wesleyan University, derides Marwell as a member of the Old Guard who fails to recognize that sociology is a vital and growing discipline. Lemert praises the list's ideological orientation, welcoming the fact that "an older generation's scientific ideal of sociology" has given way "to a more honestly political one." And he scoffs at the idea that pulling together citation numbers from the *Social Science Citation Index* would amount to much at a time when "many hundreds of sociologists...would never—not for a minute—give his [Marwell's] core journals more than a passing glance." Admonishes Lemert: "The future always belongs to the young, and those who kill their young in the name of doctrinal purity deserve to rot in the same hell of the forgotten to which they would consign those they fear."

In any case, while sociologists may ponder their required reading, it's unclear whether the public is eager to do theirs. In a brief chapter devoted to best-sellers by American sociologists, Columbia University sociologist Herbert Gans lists fifty-six books by sociologists that have sold more than fifty thousand copies. The all-time best-seller, he reports, is *The Lonely Crowd*, by David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, which is the only title on the list to sell more than one million copies. Unfortunately, it was published in 1950.

KENT WORCESTER

Gallery of Mirrors



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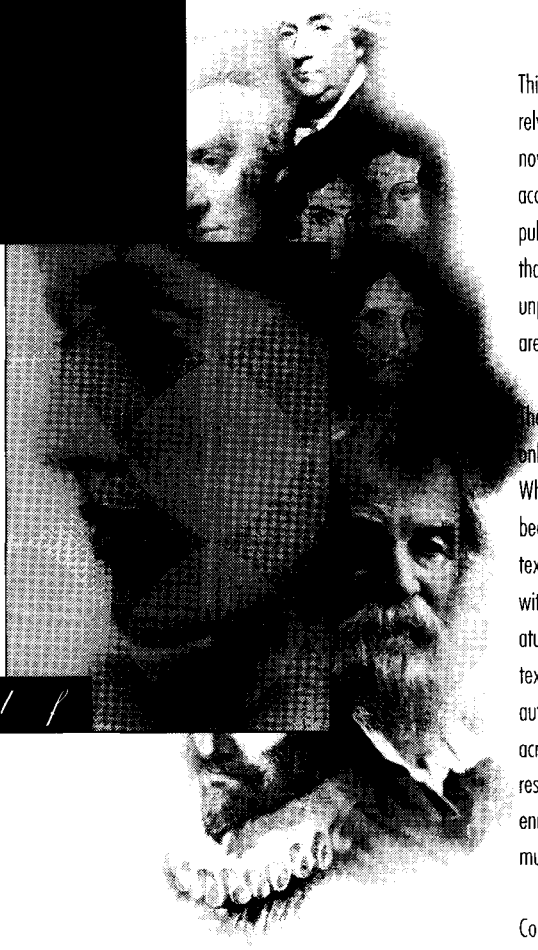

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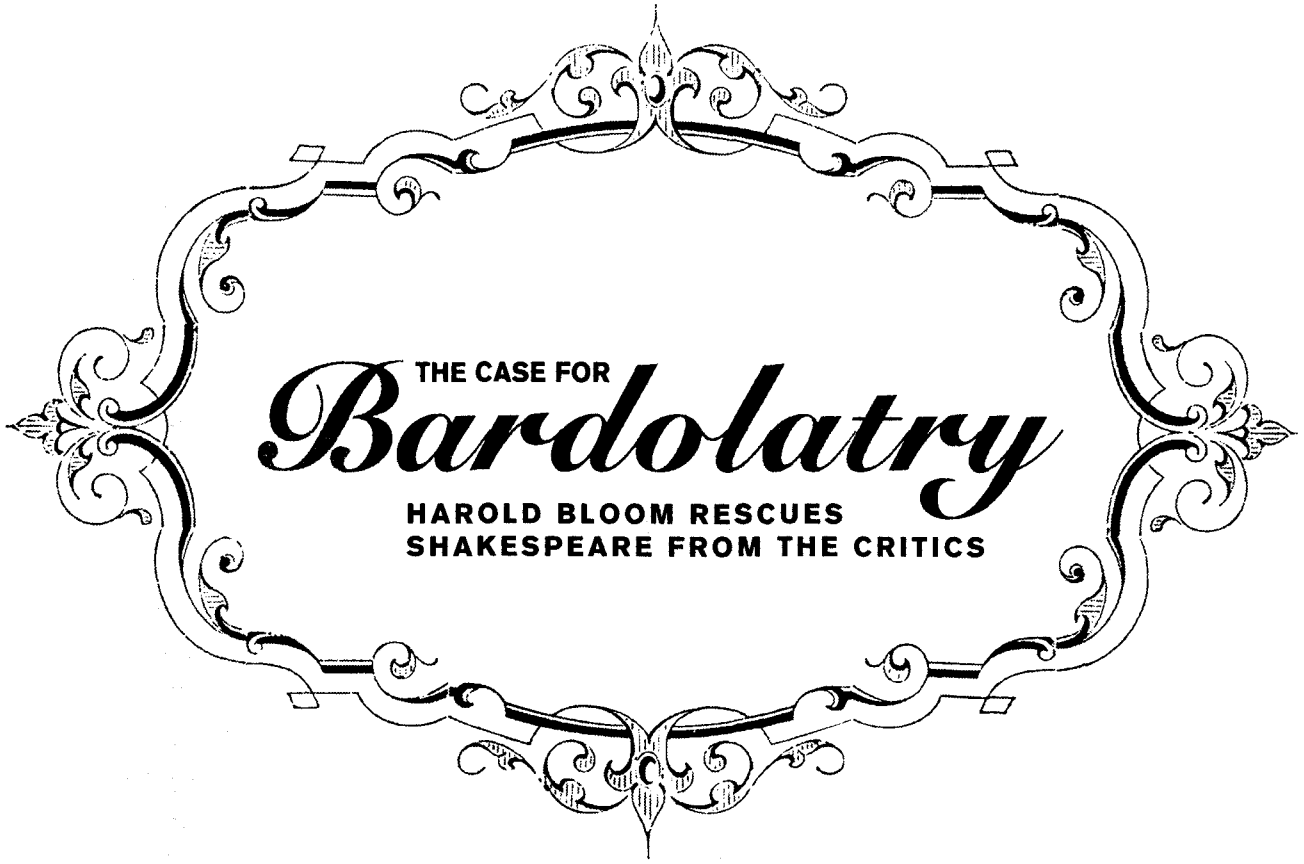

By William W. Kerrigan

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SHAKESPEARE INVENTED LITERARY character as we know it, and insofar as we create ourselves in and through literature, Shakespeare has invented us. This, in a nutshell, is the argument of Harold Bloom's *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (Riverhead). It is a massive book—around 750 pages—and it discusses in more or less detail thirty-five plays, from *The Comedy of Errors* to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. With heroic disregard for academic fashion, Bloom sets out to revive the assumption that Shakespearean drama emerges from, and has its main excellence in, profound characterizations.

In short, Bloom is attempting to bring back character criticism, an approach that rose to prominence in the last quarter of the eighteenth century but assumed its enduring contours in the Romantic criticism of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Hazlitt. Aristotle had proposed that character was subordinate to action. In the Romantic view, Shakespeare created a distinctly modern drama by reversing this priority—paradigmatically in *Hamlet*, where action is delayed or inhibited so that the hero can secrete his famously convoluted individuality at leisure. Early in the twentieth century, this tradition flowered in A.C. Bradley's classic *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904). Periodically revived during our century, character criticism has never enjoyed widespread favor among professional Shakespeareans. And it is very much in opposition to the ruling cabal of Shakespeare professionals that Bloom has written *Shakespeare*.

For two decades, Shakespeare studies has been dominated by New Historicism, which has produced litters of books, articles, and anthologies, inaugurated new journals and introduced its slant into old ones, hosted countless conferences, attacked the pieties of traditional literary criticism, and even inspired a few studies of what it all means. We can begin to assess the chasm between Bloom and this critical school by remembering that the first argument brought to prominence by New Historicism was its denial of any form of natural selfhood. An individual's belief that he is free to shape himself is, Stephen Greenblatt declared in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1981), "the ideological product of the relations of power in a society." While the specter of ambitious young academics standing up to repudiate their individuality was unquestionably amusing for a time, that first piece of mischief seems, these days, to have gone by the boards. Such extravagant claims, though sure to arouse passion, cannot be proved or disproved and rebound self-destructively on their proposers: It could just as readily be contended that Greenblatt's own argument is an "ideological product."

Bloom would agree that our humanity is an invention, though for him the inventor is not society at large but a distinct individual, William Shakespeare, whose characters display habits of introspection and self-expression that subsequently became, as dispersed through literary tradition, the stylistic givens of real modern individuals. Bloom's literary constructionism is no less extravagant—and no more subject to proof—than the New Historicists' social constructionism. It is probably wise not to enter into the ultimately empty arguments supporting these two contrasting claims. They can instead be regarded as antagonistic Weltanschauungs of late-twentieth-century literary intellectuals—a particularly clear instance of the ongoing battle between those inclined to see literature largely in terms of society or politics and those inclined to see society or politics largely in terms of literature. We have heard a great deal from the first sort of intellectual in recent decades, whereas many of the second kind have absorbed the blows in silence.

EVEN if he is fighting folly with folly, it is good to see Bloom in the field. He is so old fashioned that he seems novel. By now the New Historicism has its own pieties, its own topics to be discussed in its own jargon, its own intellectual gestures and rhetorical occasions, and, though condemned by some eminent critics, it keeps right on ticking, having come to resemble what some people call a "discursive practice." Not even its inventor seems able to stop the juggernaut. Dissatisfied with his first attempt to name the movement, Greenblatt wanted to substitute "Cultural Poetics" for "New Historicism." Both names are problematic in kindred ways. The alternative seeks prestige from whatever cachet remains in the noble old word "poetics," which has affiliations as far back as Aristotle, even though New Historicist criticism prides itself on having exposed the ideological deceptions of the Aristotelian tradition. While Greenblatt himself will now and again attest to the wonder, surprise, and intimations of genius prompted by his encounter with Shakespeare, he rarely follows through on these obiter dicta. Most New Historicists programmatically ignore almost everything anybody has ever called poetics.

As for the name that took, New Historicism is certainly not a historicism on the model of Wilhelm Dilthey's or Hans-Georg Gadamer's (based on the idea that the questions we bring to works of art, though rooted in past readings, are open to novel answers). Sidestepping most of the traditional questions and answers, New Historicism appeals to a loosely constructed model of Elizabethan ideology—one oddly similar to Freud's model of the mind, which New Historicism professes to regard with utmost wariness. Subversion threatens, only to be contained; anxiety circulates, only to be defused; contradictions press, only to issue in ameliorating fantasies. At the center of these percolating social energies stand the allied powers of court and church, which, rather like Freud's ego and superego, will tolerate serious rebelliousness only when it is cloaked in deference. New Historicism's appeal to the resonance of historical context, which might suggest that it is just a continuation of conventional scholarship by another name, usually comes down to this kind of dubious, at bottom rather banal systematizing.

Members of the sect assure us that they are, like good contemporary relativists, pursuing histories rather than History. They aim to explore, in Louis Montrose's influential formulation, "the historicity of texts and the textuality of histories." In practice, their idea of historical context (the aforementioned model

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BLOOM IS OPINION AND NOTHING BUT OPINION FROM START

of ideological production) takes precedence over literary context. Thus Montrose's well-known essay on the decisive role of primogeniture in *As You Like It* assumes that the play appeals to the grudges of disinherited younger brothers like Orlando; his social elevation through marriage to Rosalind is the ameliorating fantasy at the heart of the comedy. This might seem plausible with respect to the first two acts, though even there the dilemma of Orlando has less dramatic radiance than the remarkable friendship of Celia and Rosalind. Once the play arrives at the Forest of Arden, primogeniture becomes at best a recessive concern. It is typical of the New Historicism to use historical information to deflect attention away from, rather than direct it toward, the features of the drama that have always impressed literary minds—including in this case the absolute bond between Celia and Rosalind, able to survive the threat of marriage, and the mysterious combination of rapturous love and unblinking disillusionment in the character of Rosalind. New Historicist interpretations are not so much historical in a neutral way as tendentiously politicizing. Still, one suspects that the label stuck because, apart from its roots in German hermeneutics, "historicism" in some vague sense promises an accurate and well-organized knowledge of the past, something more solid than subjectivity or opinion or congeries of bare fact.

Bloom, by contrast, is opinion and nothing but opinion from start to finish and never claims to be anything else. Where the New Historicist disappears behind fortifications of method, Bloom beats on us with gusts of personality. The cultural materialist (a species found in the Marxist wing of New Historicism) analytically inventories the playhouse; Bloom's Romantic consciousness is somewhere out on the heath.

NO CRITICAL movement can endure without providing for its practitioners deep sources of pleasure. Whatever our beliefs, we are at some level hedonists one and all. For hundreds of years, Shakespeare's plays have offered commentators occasions to rise to—great occasions that take the measure not just of one's eloquence or cleverness but also of one's spiritual attainments. All the great Shakespearean characters are, like Falstaff, the cause of wit in others. The marriage of Kate and Petruchio, the charm of Rosalind, the rejection of Falstaff, the reflections of Hamlet, the last speeches of Othello, the death of Cordelia, and so on: These have inspired some of the best critical writing in the English language. Bloom welcomes every one of them. He has spent a lifetime training for them, and now, in *Shakespeare*, they are his, all of them, one after another. If he passes by in ignorance or lack of interest a number of places in Shakespeare that can be illuminated by reference to Renaissance culture, he does not miss a single one of the great rhetorical occasions. As Bloom understands his calling, they are what a critic lives for.

The greatest rhetorical achievement of Bloom's book is his dazzling revival of Shakespeare praise—the language appropriate to his greatness—which all contemporary Shakespeare criticism, not just New Historicism, tends to dismiss as "Bardolatry," as if such praise were a historical embarrassment rather than a major genre of English prose poetry. "Wonder, gratitude, shock, amazement," Bloom maintains, "are the accurate responses out of which one has to work." Not since the morning prayers of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* has a creator been hymned more beautifully than Bloom hymns Shakespeare. As he says: "A cognitive and affective response adequate to Shakespeare must confront greatness, both in his protagonists and in their creator." A language able to register greatness is not, in other words, icing on the cake, something added on to an understanding of Shakespeare, but is part and parcel of that understanding.

"The true Bardolatry stems from this recognition: Here at last we encounter an intelligence without limits. As we read Shakespeare, we are always engaged in catching up, and our joy is that the process is never-ending: he is still out ahead of us." There can be little doubt that, for Bloom, the main precursor in the creation of this necessary praise, this expression of "our joy" in the process of trying to catch up to Shakespeare, is Ralph Waldo Emerson, who lives in every sinew of the passage just quoted, and who wrote of Shakespeare: "He is inconceivably wise; the others, conceivably. A good reader can, in a sort, nestle

Hamlet

Ophelia

Macbeth

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TO FINISH AND NEVER CLAIMS TO BE ANYTHING ELSE.

into Plato's brain, and think from thence; but not into Shakespeare's. We are still out of doors." Indeed, the very thesis of the book is Emersonian. "Now," Emerson wrote, alluding of course to the nineteenth century, "literature, philosophy, and thought, are Shakespearized. His mind is the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see." Bloom would add psychology to this list, since he has come to believe that Freud did little more than recycle Shakespearean insights in his own system of tropes.

Though hardly alone in its disdain for Bardolatry, New Historicism has distinctive ways of looking down on it. Love, as Edward Pechter noted sometime ago, does not rank high among its guiding passions. The movement tends to regard Shakespeare praise as an ideological conspiracy, a convenience of British imperialism, a way for cultural haves to deplore the ignorance of cultural have-nots. Denying themselves one of the enduring sources of pleasure in traditional Shakespeare studies, they adopt as one of their own recurrent rhetorical occasions the new and wholly negative pleasure of maligning products of the old positive kind. They replace the idea of literary genius with what Bloom calls their own "knowingness."

Topping the numbered propositions in the dogmatic essay at the beginning of Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations* we find: "There can be no appeals to genius as the sole origin of the energies of great art." This is carefully, one might say deceptively phrased; very few people indeed, not even Bloom himself, would sign on to the idea that genius is the "sole origin" of art's energies. One might suppose from this statement that New Historicism wants to study the social side of genius. But in practice it has no truck whatsoever with genius. As Bloom shows, that would require a language dedicated to evoking greatness, and New Historicism is at best uneasy with the idea of being grateful for anything about literature, with the possible exception of its helplessness before the will of the critic. Rather than reading literature, New Historicists often interrogate it.

The movement has nothing but ridicule for the concepts of aesthetics, poetics, genius, and literary greatness. If some unique personal endowment in Shakespeare did not put the greatness into his plays, what did? "Social energies," the New Historicists answer. As Bloom suggests, their whole enterprise could be viewed as an unwitting parody of the old tradition of denying Shakespeare the authorship of his plays. That benighted gesture has mutated to meet the demands of an age that professes not to believe in individualism. The author is dead; personality is dead. In such a climate, the true author cannot be Queen Elizabeth, Francis Bacon, or the Earl of Oxford. Contemporary Shakespeare debunkers must appeal instead to the hidden hand of a conceptual entity. So Social Energies wrote the plays, perhaps with a little help from her good friend Ideological Containment.

There is no more pathetic book in modern criticism than Gary Taylor's *Reinventing Shakespeare* (1989), in which one of the two general editors of the Oxford Shakespeare, a scholar who has made a career on this poet, tells us that once you strip away all the layers of ideological varnish from the writer's reputation, nothing is left of Shakespeare beyond a few conservative attitudes nowhere near as progressive as those to be found in Thomas Middleton and a few bombastic speeches about death. Should some avatar of Ambrose Bierce ever write a *Devil's Dictionary* for the modern profession of literary studies, which has indeed asked for such a scourge by generating theories about its own professionalism, one might well find the following entry: "Professional, noun. One who has never been struck by genius." These critics seem to be interested in every kind of power except artistic.

I AM TOLD that a noted New Historicist begins her graduate Shakespeare classes by telling the students: "Do not fetishize the language." They might have to do some fetishizing of this language in order to figure out what "fetishize" means. Used in different senses by Marx and Freud, the word "fetish" has a titanic frisson for contemporary theorists. Simply to employ it appears to induce rapture. Greenblatt himself has an especially absurd section titled "The Fetishism of Dress" in the introductory matter to his Norton

FAR RIGHT: TED THAI/TIME MAGAZINE

Bottom

Mrs. Ford

Harold Bloom

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IN A NEW TWIST ON THE OLD TRADITION OF DENYING THAT SOCIAL ENERGIES WROTE THE PLAYS, WITH A LITTLE

Rosalind

Shakespeare (published last year to wide notice and substantial, though far from unanimous, praise), where he catalogs allusions to clothes and adornments in Shakespeare's plays as somehow exemplifying "fetishism," a usage that would have left both Freud and Marx shaking their heads. In any case, I suspect that the word "fetishize" in "Do not fetishize the language" must be theory-speak for "value" or "get excited about." What students are to get excited about, I guess, is the defiant act of not getting excited and using magic words like "fetishize" to congratulate themselves on their lack of taste and sensibility. One has to wonder if a critical school programmatically excluding literary greatness can possibly have a happy prognosis. In proportion to their success, the destructive gestures, along with the pleasures they afford, may run out of steam.

For what it's worth, negativity in Shakespeare always winds up destroying itself. *Troilus and Cressida* contains an exemplary account of how a blinkered fascination with the workings of power leads ultimately to nihilism:

> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey,
> And last eat up himself.

The New Historicists have expressed sharp bitterness over the fact that the old historicist E.M.W. Tillyard supposed these words to be the summit of Shakespeare's social wisdom, and no wonder. Considered as a prophetic allegory about the fate of Nietzschean/Foucauldian theories, the passage tolls their doom.

THE HABIT of reading Shakespeare's works as expressions not of imaginative power but of political domination persists in the face of what should count, even for historicists, as primary evidence—the poems and plays themselves. Knowingness is not enough: Today's critics

BLOOM'S WILD CHILDREN

IN *THE WESTERN CANON*, HAROLD BLOOM LAMENTS being "surrounded by professors of hip-hop" at NYU. Likening himself to a curmudgeonly Dr. Johnson "confronting MTV Rap or experiencing Virtual Reality," he declares his "strong refusal of such irrational attachments." Statements like these lead people to confuse Harold Bloom with the late scourge of rock and roll, Allan Bloom, but a look at some of Harold's other writings proves that he's anything but a stodgy high culture traditionalist. In his introduction to a Chelsea House volume of essays on Thomas Pynchon, for instance, Bloom rhapsodizes about the aesthetics of America, drawing no distinction between high and low:

> We all carry about with us our personal catalog of the expressions that matter most—our own versions of what they used to call the Sublime. So far as aesthetic experience in twentieth century America is concerned, I myself have a short list of the American Sublime: the war that concludes the Marx Brothers' *Duck Soup*; Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*; Wallace Stevens' "The Auroras of Autumn"; nearly all of Hart Crane; Charlie Parker playing "Parker's Mood" and "I Remember You"; Bud Powell performing "Un Poco Loco"; Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*; and most recently, the story of Byron the Light Bulb in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Not only do Groucho, Parker, and Powell get equal billing with Stevens, Crane, and West, but these writers were latecomers to the canon anyway. As a critic who challenged modernist orthodoxy to make room for the once-dismissed Miltonic line of visionary poets, Bloom is keenly aware of the canon's elasticity, and his aesthetic palate is more varied than his detractors admit. While a man of Bloom's generation might be expected to cherish old movies or bebop, the fact that he deems them sublime suggests that he is willing, indeed compelled, to take them seriously.

What may be more surprising, however, is how many of Bloom's more prominent students have embraced the study of popular culture. NYU English professor Perry Meisel—who worked with Bloom in the early 1970s and has remained a close ally ever since—uses an overtly Bloomian approach in his new book ***The Cowboy and the Dandy: Crossing Over in Romanticism and Rock and Roll*** (Oxford). And other former students like University of Virginia's Mark Edmundson and CUNY's Morris Dickstein have been able to turn toward pop culture without turning away from Bloom. Then, of course, there is Camille Paglia, whose efforts to champion the Doors as an extension of William Blake may owe much to Bloom's crusade to make the academic world safer for Romanticism.

Reminiscing about their former teacher, Meisel and Edmundson cite Bloom's passion for The Band's 1968

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SHAKESPEARE'S AUTHORSHIP, NEW HISTORICISTS CLAIM HELP FROM HER GOOD FRIEND IDEOLOGICAL CONTAINMENT.

seize any opportunity to affirm their moral superiority to the literature they study. Bloom mentions a recent edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* that prints Renaissance passages on wife beating, although Petruchio never lands a blow. There are similar examples, less brazen but still pernicious, in the Norton Shakespeare. Walter Cohen, introducing the sonnets, knows full well that Shakespeare's "dark lady" was almost certainly not dark skinned but dark haired and dark eyed. To concede that truth would, however, be a lost opportunity for this style of criticism. Art has to be contaminated with dire images: "Nonetheless, the sonnets to the mistress may be metaphorically related to the racialized discourse of the period." I am not sure what "racialized" means, but it probably means something not far from "racist." The sonnets surely "may be metaphorically related" to racism, since anything can be compared to anything, but Cohen's statement treacherously leaves open the question of whether this relating is imposed by the mind of the poet or by the mind of the commentator. Shakespeare himself, a connoisseur of comic willfulness, might have enjoyed the desperate use of "Nonetheless" at the beginning of this sentence. Nonetheless: Despite the truth, that is, despite all the evidence that the dark lady was not a person of color, one nonetheless gets to think about racism in reading the last twenty-five sonnets. Those poor students almost got off the hook.

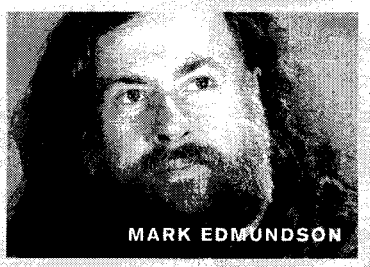
A related example of this rhetoric may be observed in Lisa Jardine's *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (1996):

> The conceptual struggle between gender and nationality in *Henry V* did not become part of my own dialogue with the play until the disintegration of former Yugoslavia and the personal tragedies of the young Bosnians who entered my classroom forced it upon me.

Not, presumably, at gunpoint. One suspects that she was not forced at all, save perhaps by the imperatives of her theoretical temperament. Here again we see

Falstaff

album *Music From Big Pink*. Meisel thinks the record appealed to Bloom because of its "heartbreaking beauty and overt Romanticism—just the usual response to a great artist from a great critic." And Edmundson recalls that Bloom once "said something about how American rock is down the tubes now that the Band is retired."



MARK EDMUNDSON

EDMUNDSON RECALLS THAT BLOOM ONCE "SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HOW AMERICAN ROCK IS DOWN THE TUBES NOW THAT THE BAND IS RETIRED."

Of course, Bloom does not always endorse the work of his wild children: Two years ago, he told *Life* magazine: "Camille believes that Madonna is a major cultural entity. I obviously do not agree." But could the author of *The Anxiety of Influence* have nonetheless encouraged his students to adapt his methods to popular culture?

Paglia was not exactly receptive to the idea that she had any mentor but herself. (Her resistance, of course, confirms Bloom's insight that the strong poet may have to deny the power of her precursor in order to assert her own originality.) "He's had absolutely no impact on me of any kind involving pop culture," says Paglia, even as she grants that Bloom's maverick status within the notoriously hidebound Yale English department attracted free-spirited students like herself. "I was the very first student who forced Bloom to think that maybe he should pay a little more attention to popular culture. I tried to convince him to take rock seriously as part of the Romantic tradition. If he took it more seriously, maybe it was my influence, what else can I say?"

LIKE PAGLIA, Dickstein sees no direct link between Bloom's teachings and his own efforts to write about th vernacular. In his 1977 book, *Gates of Eden*, Dickstei

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BLOOM WRITES, "THE TRUE BARDOLATRY STEMS FROM THIS INTELLIGENCE WITHOUT LIMITS. AS WE READ SHAKESPEARE,

politicized catastrophe being deliberately imported into the realm of literature with the aim of making any other intellectual or imaginative invitation found in that space seem by comparison indulgent and elitist—a potential diversion from the grim, yet doubtless complex, business of gender and nationality.

There are other ways to pollute the aesthetic realm. The first opinion expressed in Bloom's *Shakespeare* is a word about the editions he has used:

> I recommend the Arden Shakespeare, but frequently I have followed the Riverside or other editions. I have avoided the New Oxford Shakespeare, which perversely seeks, more often than not, to print the worst possible text, poetically speaking.

It almost goes without saying that the Norton Shakespeare, produced by New Historicists to replace the well-established Riverside Shakespeare in undergraduate classrooms, adopts the poetically inferior texts of the Oxford Edition. This is a considerable favor, since, were it not for its appearance in the Norton Shakespeare, the Oxford text would have died a hasty death, never to be read at all save by a small minority of Shakespeare scholars.

Early on, the New Historicism made an alliance with a certain school of textual editors suspicious of the idealization involved in the so-called reading text. Rather than give us a definitive version to study and contemplate, they would prefer to foist on us whenever possible multiple texts, fragmenting literature at the root level of reading. The Norton Shakespeare prints on facing pages two separately annotated texts of *King Lear*, "so that readers can compare them easily," then prints a third, "conflated" version of the play. There is only one running text of *Hamlet*, that of the folio, but passages found only in the second quarto have been inserted into the folio text, indented and printed in italics: "This format enables readers to imagine more readily the version of *Hamlet* thought to have been revised for performance during Shakespeare's own lifetime."

In both cases, these editorial decisions are made to sound as if they were favors done for readers. If these are favors, we must hope the New Historicists are never moved to do us an ill turn. I wonder how students, so overwhelmed by *King Lear* that they will do anything not to write about it and so overwhelmed by *Hamlet* that they habitually fall back on high-school treatments of the play, will deal with the added burden of being compelled by the very book in front of them to attend continually to three *Lear*s and the subtle differences between the F and Q2 *Hamlet*. I suspect that the very best students will ignore these impositions for the sake of imaginative freedom. Such fascinating issues are better left to professional historicists and their graduate trainees.

BLOOM reminds us, as perhaps no other critic could, what a tragedy it is to have the center of the canon, the best writer of all, monopolized by a school of self-important drudges. But as with

decoded Bob Dylan's lyrics and Stanley Kubrick's films. "As much as I love my old mentor," says Dickstein, I don't see the slightest connection between the work I've done in popular culture and the work I did with Bloom, which I enjoyed every minute of."

Nonetheless, Dickstein concedes that Bloom's visionary challenge to the New Critical canon helped open the door for the current academic fascination with popular culture. "The main unit of critical analysis for the New Critics had been the verbal image," says Dickstein. "People like Bloom emphasized allegory, and a lot of popular culture has a thinly veiled allegorical character. A lot of popular culture materials tend to be crystallizations of large cultural forces, so Bloom's interest in myth-making can be applied to archetypes of popular culture. You can see this in an early essay on *Frankenstein*."

Despite Bloom's engagement with the Gothic of Mary Shelley, Mark Edmundson says that he never had a feel for the popular forms of Gothic at the heart of Edmundson's recent *Nightmare on Main Street* (Harvard). But Edmundson still believes that his work is deeply tied to his old artificer.

"I think that when Bloom writes about popular culture, it's about things that he thinks are particularly wonderful. He really wants people to run out and see W.C. Fields's *The Fatal Glass of Beer* or the Marx Brothers' *Duck Soup*. When I picked some horror movies that I think are just terrific, that's after Bloom's spirit somewhat. He has the confidence to go almost anywhere and say, 'Yes, I like that. That's good stuff,' and then talk about it critically. But when I write about why everyone's interested in *Forrest Gump*, that, to Bloom, is a foreign question. He's just interested in the best stuff." Even though the sociology (as opposed to the aesthetics) of popular culture would seem to be out of

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RECOGNITION: HERE AT LAST WE ENCOUNTER AN
WE ARE ALWAYS ENGAGED IN CATCHING UP."

anybody, and particularly so with Bloom, one pays a price for his virtues. His chapter on *King Lear* is an absolute triumph. He is superb on Rosalind. He is so winningly in love with Falstaff—at one point noting that he himself might be a parody of the Eastcheap Socrates—that we should probably forgive him his distaste for Hal and be grateful for his perhaps wishful concession that "every one of us responds to the joyousness of *Henry V*." He does magnificently well with the first four acts of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, then flounders with the play within a play in Act 5, in part because his admiration for Bottom does not extend to Bottom the actor.

But he butchers *Measure for Measure* in the usual ways. I thought that all the mud of history had already been slung at Duke Vincentio, just as all the false praise in the universe had already been heaped on the vile Lucio, but Bloom manages to come up with some new wrinkles: We can now add to Vincentio's endless list of metaphorical crimes that of the psycho-

King Lear

Bloom's domain, Bloom's *Omens of Millennium* attempted to trace the dross of New Age culture to its roots, somewhat in the manner of Edmundson's *Nightmare*.

As for Meisel, he is baffled when I tell him that some of Bloom's disciples question the extent of his connection to pop culture and deny that their own approaches to it owe anything to him. Meisel thinks they protest too much. "What's the big deal to acknowledge that Harold provides a methodological frame by which one's work can extend well beyond the literary?" he asks. "He says the same thing himself in private conversation. The text tells you. A later text will bear the stamp of an earlier one, even if it's, say, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* or *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*." He adds: "When you watch *Mary*, it's a fuller unpacking of the earlier show. It narrates its own historicity. Even when a baseball announcer says so-and-so's windup is reminiscent of Steve Carlton's, it is a metaphor that fits right into Bloom's influence theory."

Meisel notes that his mentor still has a sympathetic ear for popular music: "I played a Jackie Wilson tape for Bloom just to see what would happen, and he was blown away. He said, 'What the hell is this? My dear, his tenor is absurd!'" Speaking of his new book, Meisel says, "there's a chapter about Jackie Wilson, Smokey Robinson, and Al Green that's overtly Bloomian. The musicians make Bloomian arguments all the time. They walk out of the clubs and say, 'So-and-so is a really fabulous player, but he just can't overcome this other player.'" If some of Bloom's other former students, Paglia in particular, fail to see the connection between their pop-culture writing and Bloom's tutelage, Meisel chalks it up to "insufficient self-analysis."

One thing's for sure: Those who have encountered Bloom's charismatic teaching must somehow contend with his influence, deny it though they may. And what they take from Bloom is less a scholarly method or a set of judgments than an attitude—a Romantic embrace of aesthetic possibility coupled with an Emersonian belief that "nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." Edmundson is grateful for the lesson. "I think that anyone with an open mind is surprised by Bloom's remarkable exuberance. Part of what he taught us was to see what really interests and moves you in culture and to go with it and talk about it in your own perspective. If part of your life was rock and roll or horror movies, then you should talk about it with some conviction," he says.

Partisans of cultural studies might see Bloom as the relic of an outmoded establishment to be ignored or scorned. But that, says Edmundson, would be a misreading: "Perform a little thought experiment and think about what English departments would be like if this one guy had decided to become a great lawyer instead of a great English professor. They would be about 80 percent duller than they are."

DAVID YAFFE

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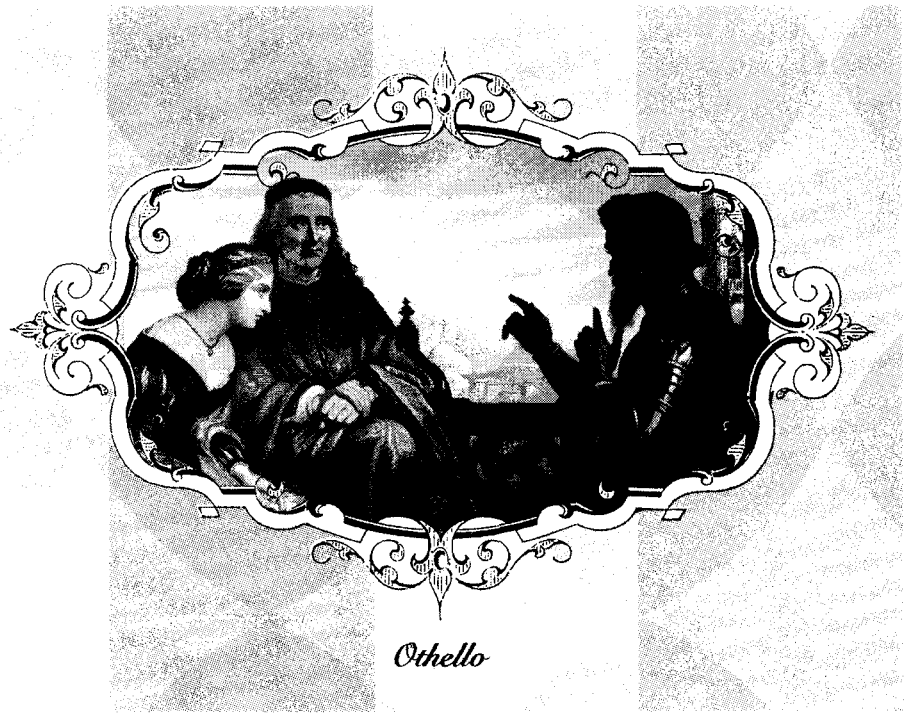
NEW HISTORICISM IS AT BEST UNEASY WITH THE IDEA OF WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF ITS HELPLESSNESS



Othello

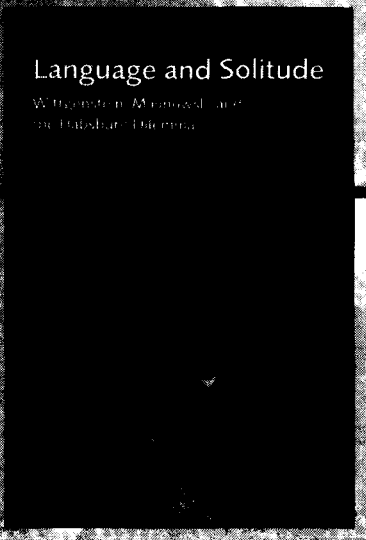
analyst who seduces his female patient. Bloom declares, in his own spin on the conventional wisdom, that the duplicitous duke is "a kind of anarchistic precursor of Iago." My own view is that Vincentio, like Prospero in *The Tempest*, is a stand-in for Shakespeare himself: His manipulations are not malignancy but art. The *Hamlet* chapter seems to me a whole lot of hot air; outdoing Joyce with the metaphor of self-fathering, while a suggestive ambition, hardly guarantees that one has kept in touch with the tragedy. In a move also found in New Historicist criticism of *Othello* (as well as in the work of Stanley Cavell), Bloom takes the preposterous tack that Othello and Desdemona never consummate their marriage. The first half of his *Macbeth* discussion argues, via misplaced devotion to Nietzsche, that the play cannot be about guilt. Then, of course the play being what it is, fairly saturated with guilt, he finds nothing relevant to talk about.

Language and Solitude

Wittgenstein, Malinowski, and the Habsburg Dilemma

Ernest Gellner

*Preface by **David Gellner***



"Language and Solitude is at once a synoptic interpretation of the thought of Wittgenstein, and Malinowski; a comparative assessment of their world-views—their accounts of knowledge, language, a culture; a brilliant sociological sketch of the common socio-political and intellectual background which they shared; a view of their influence upon their respective disciplines; and a passionate and polemical argument with them and some of their successors, in which Gellner once more and for the last time eloquently and succinctly expresses his own world view."

— Steven Lukes

Ernest Gellner (1925-1995) has been described as "one of the last great central European polymath intellectuals." In this, his last book, he throws new light on two key figures of the twentieth century: the philosopher Wittgenstein, and Malinowski, founder of modern British social anthropology. Gellner shows how the thought of both men grew from a common background of assumptions about human nature, society, and language. He ties together themes that preoccupied him, epitomizing his belief that philosophy—far from "leaving everything as it is"—is about important historical, social and personal issues.

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BEING GRATEFUL FOR ANYTHING ABOUT LITERATURE, BEFORE THE WILL OF THE CRITIC.

Through most of the book we are spared Shakespeare the Gnostic, that old heretical cult being perhaps the most tiresome of Bloom's hobbyhorses, but the theme does surface now and then toward the end of *Shakespeare*. Bloom's worst tic in this book is his constant assumption of the brilliance of Nietzsche—this from a man who now thinks Freud to be sheer bunk! In particular, one wearies of his repeated invocation of the maxim from *Twilight of the Idols*, which he gives (in what may be his own translation) as "That for which we can find words, is already dead in our hearts. There is always a kind of contempt in the act of speaking." Are we not interested in how our opinions make way in the world? Is there no delight in another's encounter with them? Do we not, in the act of speaking, regularly develop or change or playfully transform our thoughts? The maxim might apply pretty well to a frustrated sage, sick of repeating himself without persuading everyone, or, alternatively, to a rigid simpleton whose ideas never vary. I cannot think of a single speech in Shakespeare much illuminated by this pseudo-profundity.

But Bloom's is a Romantic consciousness, insistent on itself. He brings to Shakespeare a mind not to be changed, or not that much, by the recoveries of good scholarship or the probabilities of sound history. He is in some ways the extreme called forth by the excesses of New Historicism. Sublime though he is, Bloom too often indulges the likes and dislikes of a defiantly self-impressed personality. As he remarked of literary interpretation in *The Western Canon*: "The only method is the self."

For all its aridities, New Historicism at least recognizes that our understanding of Shakespeare must take account of historical knowledge, which the self in its immediacy almost surely lacks. But the movement, so willing to indulge in political attitudinizing, is not historical enough: What is needed, now as always, is the old scholarly ideal that modern selves can be pried loose from their immediate feelings, liberated from narcissistic self-enclosure, by disciplined historical learning. "You keep both Rule and Energy in view, / Much power in each, most in the balanced two," Thom Gunn writes in his poem "To Yvor Winters, 1955"—a fine couplet with room for both method and personality. If we could take the best from Bloom and the scholarly impulses behind New Historicism, we might get something like a historically informed imagination. That, to my mind, ought to be the ideal of literary study.

William W. Kerrigan teaches English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His second book on Shakespeare will be published next year by Johns Hopkins.

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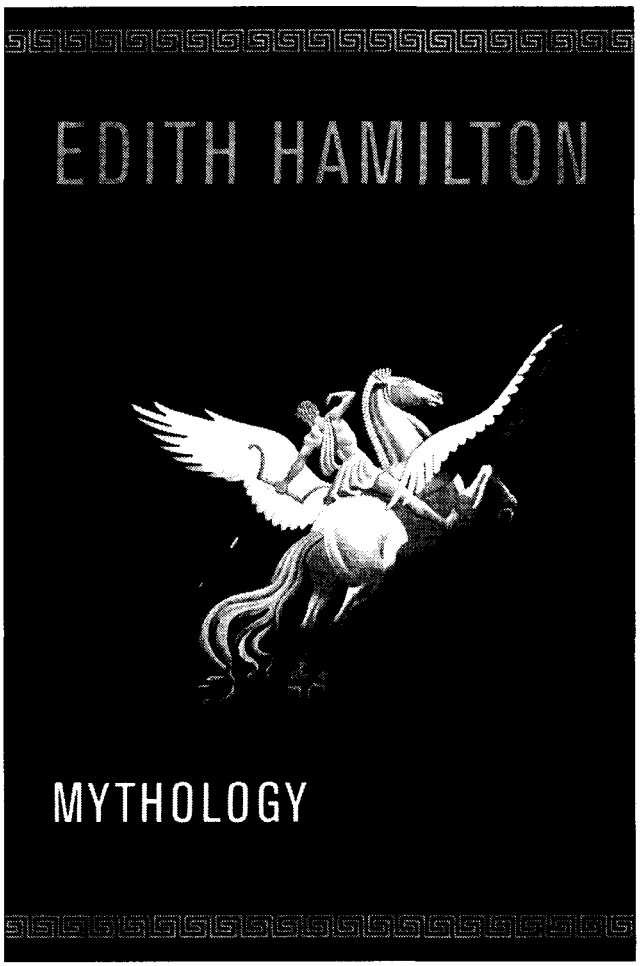

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BLACK LIKE ME

CONCEPTUAL ARTIST ADRIAN [illegible] GETS UNDER YOUR SKIN

BY **ADAM SHATZ**

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LAST SUMMER, ADRIAN PIPER, AN ARTIST known for her confrontational installations about race, came out to her friends at Kripalu, a yoga center in the Berkshires. Only she didn't tell them she was gay; she told them she was black. A fair-skinned woman with no discernably African features, Piper is often the only person in the room who knows this.

I happened to arrive at Kripalu the following morning to interview Piper. We were chatting in a lobby decorated with flyers for workshops on "celebrating anger" and "goddess chants" when a man came over to greet her. "What a surprise that was last night," he said warmly. "We had no idea you came from *that* culture." More than matching his effusiveness, she replied, "Yeah, well, I always tell people that this is the only place in the world where white people don't make racist comments when they think they're among themselves."

ADRIAN PIPER

Piper, a woman of fifty with big eyes and a dancer's figure, turned to me and said, "I've been coming here since 1992. No one knew I was black because I never said it. It's not that people don't discuss race—they talk about their interracial relationships, they talk about crime and poverty and slavery. But they don't make racist remarks. So I've never had to come out. It's a real safe place for me."

It might seem odd that an artist so closely associated with racial politics would choose not to disclose her race to some of her longtime companions. But such a paradox is typical of the life and work of Adrian Piper. As an artist, she is an in-your-face political activist; in person, she is extremely private, even fearful. "My primary motivation as an artist," she told me, "is to create a context in which I feel comfortable, a context in which people like me feel safe." Viewers, on the other hand, tend to register only Piper's aggression, not her fear. Her art is designed to get under your skin—all the more so if your skin is white. Piper addresses art-world sophisticates as if their high-mindedness were an elaborate self-deception. "All of us, socialized into a racist society, are racists," she says matter-of-factly.

It is an assumption that may be especially painful, if not infuriating, to the kind of whites who might turn out for an exhibit by a black artist. But making such viewers squirm is one of Piper's aims. In *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma* (1978), you walk into a square room and face a photograph of a group of black people staring into the eye of the camera. You are all alone. Suddenly, the silence is filled by Piper's voice-over:

> It doesn't matter who these people are. They're parts of a piece of art.... You want to have an aesthetic experience: to be fulfilled, elevated, edified.... In looking at this picture, you carefully monitor any subliminal or undisciplined reactions you have to this image of assertive, aggressive, angry-looking blacks; they might be a part of the piece. How do the images in this picture relate to each other? How is the two-dimensionality of the picture plane treated?... Are these the right questions to ask about this work?... Are you being preached to? Again?... Why do you feel embarrassed if someone else in the room sees you staring at yourself like this?... What exactly is the aesthetic *content* of this work? What is it trying to tell you?

It's a blistering parody of how a believer in art for art's sake might respond. But if this monologue echoes your thoughts, you're bound to feel burned. Aestheticism, Piper seems to be telling you, is simply the last refuge of the liberal racist.

One of the first artists to inject identity politics into the arid geometries of 1960s conceptualism, Piper has tirelessly explored what it feels like to be on the receiving end of the racial gaze—what it feels like to be the target of racial stereotypes. Her work—which includes videos, performances, photographs, and drawings, in addition to installation pieces—has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, the Kunsthalle Berne, and the Paris Biennale; and there are plans for a traveling retrospective next year. "I think art historians are finally acknowledging just how generative she has been," says art critic Maurice Berger. "I don't see how you could *not* be influenced by Adrian's work if you're dealing with issues of race and representation." Piper's collected writings on art and aesthetic theory, *Out of Order, Out of Sight,* were published in two hefty volumes by MIT Press in 1996, and her autobiographical essay, "Passing for White, Passing for Black," published in *Transition* in 1992, is on its way to becoming a classic in the literature on racial passing, cited by literary critics, philosophers, and legal scholars. For better or for worse, her life as a black woman who involuntarily passes for white has only added to the public's fascination with her.

As if that weren't enough, Piper is also a Harvard-trained philosopher with a tenured chair at Wellesley. This fall, as a fellow at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, she will be working on a massive study of Kant, a thinker she reveres despite his frankly racist views. ("Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of whites," he blithely proclaimed.) She works in a distinctly unglamorous, distinctly cautious branch of philosophy that is generally resistant to addressing the bold social questions raised by her artwork. In Piper's current project on Kant, tentatively titled *Rationality and the Structure of the Self*, she paints an adoring portrait of the German philosopher as a theorist of the supremacy of reason over instinct and desire. No one will mistake this sober work of philosophical argument for social criticism. Most of Piper's academic peers don't know that she is an artist, much less a maker of racially charged work, and she prefers to keep it that way.

PIPER'S ART is difficult to interpret. Is her point that because race is a cultural myth we would do well to discard it? Or is it that, myth or not, race now corresponds to real and insurmountable differences? Is Piper a visionary of an America beyond the color line or a pessimist who thinks that beliefs about race have wrought irreparable damage? In fact, she is both, which makes her a telling symptom of America's racial confusion since the end of legal segregation. Ours is the era of *The Cosby Show* and the Simpson trial, of a rising black middle class and a rising black prison class, of

MAURICE BERGER

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elegant attacks on the idea of race in the academy and racially motivated attacks in the street. Angry and hopeful by turns, Piper's art lends itself to the agendas of both color-blind idealism and racial militancy, often at one and the same time.

That doubleness of perspective is also evident in Piper's critical writings about her work. Like the legal scholar Derrick Bell and the sociologist Andrew Hacker, Piper doubts that whites will ever share power with black people on an equal basis. Bleaker still, she views racism as a "visual" and "cognitive" pathology that is "deeply buried in the structure of the self." In a 1992 article in *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, Piper portrayed racism as a defensive, almost helpless "alarm reaction" by the self to individuals who "do not conform to one's preconceptions about how persons ought to look or behave." And according to Piper, black people are more jarringly "anomalous" to whites than Asian, Latino, or Arab immigrants. As she puts it, "The fact that African Americans did not choose to come here, did not feel they had anything to gain by coming here, makes their attitude, their carriage, their background, their history, their behavior, their assumptions completely different from those of any of these groups." In this extensive inventory of black otherness, Piper comes close to the grim arguments of Nathan Glazer's *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*, in which black Americans appear as the lone outsiders to the American Dream, irremediably beyond hope of genuine inclusion.

At the same time, she believes that we are innately equipped with the hardware to analyze and combat racism, namely reason. According to Piper, racism is not only a pathology; it is also a "cognitive error" that cries out for the kind of cognitive therapy that, she insists, art can best supply. When we look at works of art, she observes, we engage in an especially attentive kind of "cognitive discrimination," the making and sifting of fine-grained distinctions about visual data. When the normal process of cognitive discrimination breaks down, we see a person as a member of a race rather than as an individual. By administering a kind of racial shock treatment in her art, Piper tries to force viewers to reflect on what happens—and who gets hurt—when they fail to be as discriminating about people as they are about art. It is a passionate, direct appeal to her viewers' ability to see the error of their ways. (Pleasure seems almost beside the point in Piper's aesthetic program, which is mainly concerned with patterns of cognition.)

ASPECTS OF THE LIBERAL DILEMMA, 1978

AESTHETICISM, PIPER IMPLIES, IS SIMPLY THE LAST REFUGE OF THE LIBERAL RACIST.

According to Piper, viewers ideally experience works like *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma* in three stages: trauma, reflection, and rational illumination. First, the audience feels discomfort, irritation, resentment. (Protesting to Piper that you're not a racist is about as effective as telling a Freudian analyst you're not repressed; it's simply a symptom of denial.) Then they step back, examine their reactions, and ask why they feel the work—an installation that speaks to anyone who enters and therefore to no one in particular—is addressing *them*. Finally, they come to grips with their internalized racism, see it for the ludicrous, hurtful thing that it is, and perhaps leave the room with a commitment to change.

But Piper's art does not always work as she expects. In 1980 she mounted *Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems*, an installation featuring photos of black men accompanied by recordings of voices engaged in rambling, anti-black monologues. She imagined that she was giving her viewers a taste of their prejudices and a chance to examine them rationally. To her horror, though, several viewers thanked her for "expressing their views so eloquently." It's not clear, either, that Piper's art alters the behavior of sophisticated viewers who understand her satirical aims. There is a long and complicated history in the arts of white liberal audi-

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CATALYSIS III, 1970

ences who, confronted by black rage, have flogged themselves in penitence, owned up to their racism...and done nothing. It could be that, despite her intentions, Piper ends up playing a kind of dominatrix to her white liberal admirers, providing them with the ultimate masochistic frisson.

THE ONLY child of a real estate lawyer from West Virginia and a Jamaican woman who worked as a secretary at City College of New York, Adrian Margaret Smith Piper was born in 1948, in the Sugar Hill section of Harlem, a genteel enclave of black professionals. Among Daniel and Olive Piper's friends were some of Harlem's most distinguished citizens, including the Delaney sisters, Adam Clayton Powell, and Romare Beardon. Although they had little money—Daniel Piper's Harlem clients often paid him in cakes and mended shirts—her parents were determined to provide Adrian with an elite education. At the age of six, Adrian earned a scholarship to New Lincoln, a progressive private school. With piano lessons at home, art classes at MoMA, and summers spent upstate at a liberal, integrated camp, Piper came to acquire, she says, a sense of entitlement more common to privileged white males than to young black girls. Her parents never told her she should expect anything less from the world because she was "colored," a mild-mannered term then favored by some members of the black bourgeoisie. In fact, Piper told me, "My parents didn't even talk about race. They wanted to shelter me. They really believed that if I got all this education I would remain unscathed."

Still, from early on, Piper was acutely aware of being different. "Everyone in my neighborhood thought that my family and I were white," she recalls. "And particularly in the early 1960s, when Harlem was becoming more working class, we were often treated very badly." On the way to school, neighborhood kids jeered at her, calling her "Paleface"—an experience that inspired one of her *Political Self-Portraits*, a 1978 work in which she typed an anguished recollection over a passport photograph. "It wasn't possible to say, 'Hey,

PASSING: A BRIEF HISTORY

RACIAL PASSING IS ALMOST AS OLD AS THE COLOR LINE itself. For nearly two centuries, millions of Americans, from runaway slaves to the literary critic Anatole Broyard, have concealed their African ancestry in order to pass for white. In their efforts to leave behind the frustrations of being black for the privileges of being white, passers have often rejected their families, lied to their closest friends, and lived in fear of discovery. But they have frequently had the last laugh at the expense of racists who—as Nella Larsen writes in her novel *Passing* (1929)—imagine they can spot a black person "by the most ridiculous means, finger-nails, palms of hands, shapes of ears, teeth, and other equally silly rot."

As Harvard professor Werner Sollors notes in his magisterial study *Neither Black nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (Oxford, 1997), the phrase "to pass" was first used in the 1830s in ads seeking the arrest of fugitive slaves who were suspected of trying to "pass for white." Before long, passing attracted the attention of such writers as Gustave de Beaumont, whose 1835 novel *Marie; or, Slavery in the United States* evokes the passer's fear that "men could guess it, when they could not longer see it," and Mark Twain, whose novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894) tells of a slave woman who secretly switches her fair-skinned son with the master's progeny.

Racial passing came into its own as a literary subject during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Nearly every Harlem writer worth his or her salt attempted to capture the experience, which many of them knew firsthand. Besides Larsen's *Passing*, the most celebrated accounts were James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912), a pseudo-memoir that was published anonymously and fueled speculation about its author's identity; and George Schuyler's science-fiction satire, *Black No More* (1931), in which a scientist invents a machine that transforms blacks into whites, to the consternation of both the Klan and the NAACP. While these writers viewed the success of passers as a hilarious triumph over racist assumptions, they also believed it led to destructive forms of self-deception—and to family betrayal. In Langston Hughes's short story "Passing," a man writes to a woman who saw him in the company of a white girlfriend to thank her for not giving "a sign that you even knew me, let alone that I was your son."

How prevalent was passing? Nearly all black Americans are of mixed descent, but the option of passing has been open only to those whose blackness is least visible. Since passers have about as much interest in coming forward as spies, estimates vary wildly. According to the March 1948 issue of *Ebony*, there were "Five Million White Negroes." But while cropping up in the films of white auteurs like Douglas Sirk (*Imitation of Life*) and John Cassavetes

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IS PIPER A VISIONARY OF AN AMERICA BEYOND THE COLOR LINE OR A PESSIMIST ABOUT RACE?

CATALYSIS IV, 1970-71

stop harassing me, in fact I'm a sister.' It was very painful, and I had to deal with feelings of irrational anger at people who were acting out on me for reasons that had nothing to do with who I was."

Though many of the kids at New Lincoln were leftists and Piper helped run the school's SNCC chapter, she found herself treated as a racial curiosity. More than once, friends invited her to their homes and made their parents try to guess her racial identity. And then there was the fifth-grade instructor who asked Daniel and Olive Piper whether their daughter understood that she was colored.

She did, of course. But what exactly did it mean to be colored? Did it mean you weren't black or white but a little bit of both? Or neither? There were no simple answers in Piper's family, which was as haunted by color consciousness as the characters in a Harlem Renaissance novel. Daniel Piper, an extremely light-skinned man who had passed for white during World War II because he wanted to see combat, could easily have crossed the color line permanently but opted not to out of loyalty to his family. Many of his relatives had chosen to pass, severing their ties to the black Pipers so as not to provoke any suspicion among whites. When Adrian was an adolescent, her paternal aunt—who had made headlines for being the first black woman to attend Vassar College and Yale Medical School—married a white man, and the black Pipers never heard from her again.

Early on, Piper could sense that race was a painfully contradictory concept: at once cultural fiction and inescapable reality, alternately flexible and rigid, rarely predictable, and almost always traumatic.

(*Shadows*), passing largely disappeared from black literature after the Harlem Renaissance. With the emergence of Richard Wright in mid-century, the slum replaced high society as the setting of the black novel; and while Bigger Thomas and his descendants faced many harrowing obstacles, being mistaken for white was decidedly not one of them. Meanwhile, blackness was losing its associations with shame and humiliation, and acquiring new and heady associations with pride, beauty, and cool. In an essay titled "Passing Is Passé," Harlem Renaissance chronicler Nathan Huggins wrote that black power "has made anachronistic the game of hide-and-seek."

And so it had, at least for black writers. A handful of their white peers, on the other hand, found passing more intriguing than ever—so much so that they began to try it themselves. John Griffin, the author of *Black Like Me* (1961), had his skin chemically darkened and traveled through the South in an earnest effort to understand the black experience. And then there was the strange case of the French novelist Alain Albert. In the early 1960s, Albert, a Jew from Lyons, managed to persuade Jean-Paul Sartre, the black expatriate writer Chester Himes, and Richard Wright's wife, Ellen, that he was a black man from Mississippi with a background nearly identical to that of Joe Christmas, the tragic mulatto protagonist of Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932). After publishing *The Crossing* (1964), a novel set in the American South, Albert fled to Mali, where he became the director of state radio and was never heard from again.

In recent years, the subject of racial passing has made a comeback in American letters and popular culture, owing perhaps to the increased visibility of biracial Americans in public life and to academic interest in the construction of identity. Adrian Piper's 1992 essay in *Transition*, "Passing for White, Passing for Black," expressed the sorrows of being a black woman who is constantly mistaken for white, by whites and blacks alike. And in his book *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, Pluralism* (Duke, 1996), Johns Hopkins English professor Walter Benn Michaels argued that the concept of passing relies on the fallacy that individuals have an authentic racial identity that they can pass into or out of. The tragic aftermath of a passing man's exposure was the subject of a recent episode of *Law and Order*. Passing is also at the heart of Danzy Senna's new novel, *Caucasia*. But perhaps the most perceptive treatment comes from the comedian Eddie Murphy. In one of his most memorable *Saturday Night Live* skits, "White Like Me," Murphy strolled along the streets in whiteface and found, to his surprise and delight, that being white was a never-ending festivity. Since its inception, passing has been a quietly subversive attempt to crash that party. **—A.S.**

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In her immediate family, passing constituted an unpardonable betrayal. Hence the bitterness of works like the video *Cornered* (1988), in which Piper lashes out at viewers who "feel that my letting people know I'm not white is making an unnecessary fuss [and] that the right and proper course of action for me to take is to pass for white." These early experiences probably explain why, despite her professed view that race is a fictional construct, she has clung to it as though it were the unsurpassing truth of her identity—and perhaps of yours as well. As she taunted viewers of *Cornered*: "If someone can look and sound like me and still be black, then no one is safely, unquestionably white. No one. The chances are quite good that you are in fact black."

As a teenager, though, Piper longed to be released from the burdens of identity. She found liberation in the streets, in LSD experimentation, and in art. The 1960s had, conveniently, arrived.

AT THE AGE of fourteen, Piper joined a Puerto Rican gang led by a gay performance artist who held séances and conjured spirits along upper Broadway. Three years later, she was living on her own, supporting herself through fashion modeling. She dropped acid, made psychedelic drawings, and took up yoga. In the evening, she made extra cash dancing in a leotard in elevated cages at nightclubs. Fearing for her sanity, Piper's parents had her briefly committed to Hillside, a mental institution in Queens.

Then, one day in 1967, Piper, now a student at New York City's School of Visual Arts, walked into the Dwan Gallery and left transformed. The exhibit she saw was Sol LeWitt's *46 Variations on Three Different Kinds of Cube,* a room of forty-six stacked cubes, some open, some closed, arranged in rows four feet high and lit so as to render visible each cube's contours. Piper's sense of wonder is still fresh when she evokes LeWitt's austere, yet oddly sensual installation. "The cubes had such presence, such dignity; there was something so simple about them. And yet at the same time, there were such mysteries, because it was clear they were generated by a system, but you couldn't tell what the system was. It reminded me of hearing a Bach fugue without having studied the sheet music in advance. It was a very mind-expanding work. It was a concrete and physical demonstration of the beauty of mathematics and the rule of logic."

When the art critic Rosalind Krauss panned LeWitt's show in *Artforum*, Piper was so enraged she wrote the artist to console him; LeWitt, in turn, sent her two studies for the piece (which now hang in Piper's living room in Wellesley) and suggested they meet for a beer. Soon she was living in a loft in Little Italy above LeWitt, a quiet, avuncular man twice her age, who became her mentor. While continuing to pay her rent by modeling, Piper published conceptual pieces in Vito Acconci's *0 to 9* magazine and participated in group shows at the Paula Cooper and the Dwan Galleries. Her best work from this period—for example, *Utah-Manhattan Transfer* (1968), in which a New York City subway map lies on the Mormon heartland, creating a pixilated palimpsest—has the purity of form, the economy of means, and the flair for high pranks that distinguish her mature work.

Nowhere in these early abstract pieces

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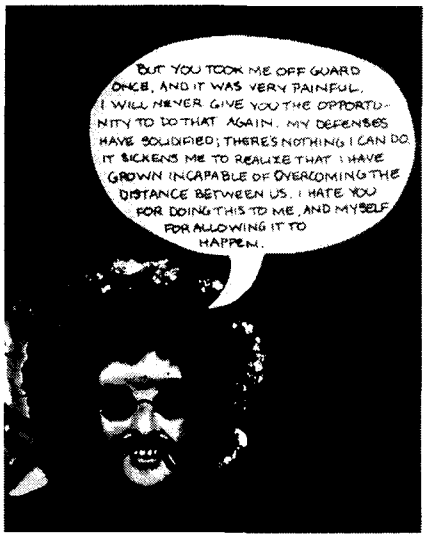
DOES PIPER PLAY A KIND OF DOMINATRIX TO HER WHITE LIBERAL ADMIRERS, PROVIDING THEM WITH THE ULTIMATE MASOCHISTIC FRISSON?

is there any hint of concern with race or identity. The conceptualism of artists like Sol LeWitt was ardently formalist, almost completely devoid of reference to a world beyond the play of rectilinear shapes and phenomenological states. (To this day, Piper maintains that she is "a formalist, very, very deeply.") Though works like *46 Variations* may have contained a subtle parody of the madly rationalized world that the masters of the war in Vietnam had built, as social protest they were fairly inert. In its cultural profile, moreover, conceptualism was as "white" as its fiery contemporary, the Black Arts Movement led by Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, was "black." "Most of us had no idea Adrian was black," says Lucy Lippard, a feminist art critic who has known Piper for years.

"She didn't hide it. But I don't think I realized it until I met her parents at the loft on Hester Street."

When, I asked Piper, did she begin to identify herself publicly as a black woman? "I always did," she insisted. "Some things are so basic that it just doesn't occur to you to mention them." Even so, it is striking that in her metacriticism—the reflections on her own practice collected in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*—Piper moves from a virtual silence about her racial identity to loquacious self-assertion in the mid-1970s.

"What most affected me was the struggle for open admissions at City College," says Piper, who enrolled there as a philosophy major in 1970. "Black students were shutting down the campus. I was physically in this situation where I


BUT YOU TOOK ME OFF GUARD ONCE, AND IT WAS VERY PAINFUL. I WILL NEVER GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT AGAIN. MY DEFENSES HAVE SOLIDIFIED; THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO. IT SICKENS ME TO REALIZE THAT I HAVE GROWN INCAPABLE OF OVERCOMING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US. I HATE YOU FOR DOING THIS TO ME, AND MYSELF FOR ALLOWING IT TO HAPPEN.

THE MYTHIC BEING I/YOU (HER) #10 OF 10, 1974

was trying to take notes in my philosophy classes and people would stride in and say, 'This class is over. We're having a rally. Now!'" Piper didn't join them on the barricades, however. "I was your basic apolitical philosophy nerd," she says. Though she exaggerates her political innocence—she was active in both femi-

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WHEN PIPER FIRST ADDRESSED RACE, SHE DID SO BY DISGUISING HERSELF AS A MAN.

nist and antiwar groups—it's clear that the events at City College shook her profoundly. The spectacle of black defiance, of protesters disrupting the seminar, represented something new to Piper, something strikingly "anomalous," to borrow her preferred term.

Amid the tumult at City College, Piper began to wonder whether the kind of quiet, cerebral art she had been making was not a useless passion. "I was being confronted by urgent political struggles, and I was doing this very rarefied and elitist work. I was feeling impatient to get past that scrim of obfuscation between me and the external world," she explains. Like many women artists in the 1970s, her solution was to do away with the medium of the art object and make herself the medium instead. She would now confront her viewers directly.

In one of her unannounced performances from the series *Catalysis* (1970–1972), Piper roamed the streets wearing clothes she had soaked in vinegar, eggs, milk, and cod-liver oil, a stunningly attractive (and stunningly malodorous) vagabond. "No one could have smelled anything like this before! It had to be anomalous," she explains. On the subway, men in suits fondled her: "They thought I was engaged in some kind of sexual provocation—you know, the whipped-cream-and-honey school of sexual arousal! So that was very disconcerting. It was really amazing to me that I could be constructed that way." In these audacious experiments, Piper was honing her talent for making herself, as she would later put it, a "cognitive anomaly," an object of fascination, bewilderment, and fear.

Piper used the same strategy in her *Mythic Being* series and addressed race explicitly for the first time. Ironically, she did so by disguising herself as a man. From 1972 to 1975, the Mythic Being, with "his" Afro, penciled mustache, and dark shades, was Piper's alter ego. Upon entering Harvard as a graduate student in philosophy in the fall of 1974, she began introducing unsuspecting Cambridge pedestrians to the Mythic Being. In one performance, she sat on a street corner leering lasciviously at white women; in another, she staged a fake mugging. "People reacted to me as though I were a black male, and that's incredibly unpleasant. White women would clutch their purses and go into neighboring cars in the subway—the usual bag of tricks. But nobody ever blew my cover."

It's remarkable that no one did. Piper is frail, almost waiflike. In the surviving documents of the *Mythic Being* series, she suggests a female Chaplin clumsily trying to emulate black street macho. But the absurdity of Piper's charade was lost on her viewers, a failure of perception that she considers symptomatic of racism. In her view, the whites who

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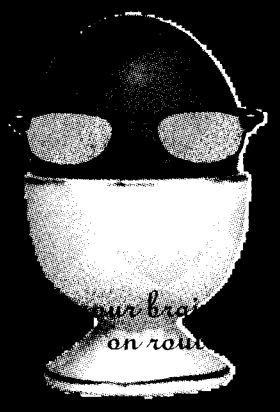

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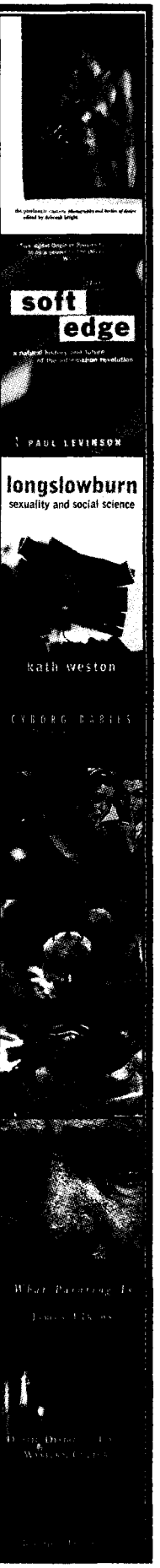

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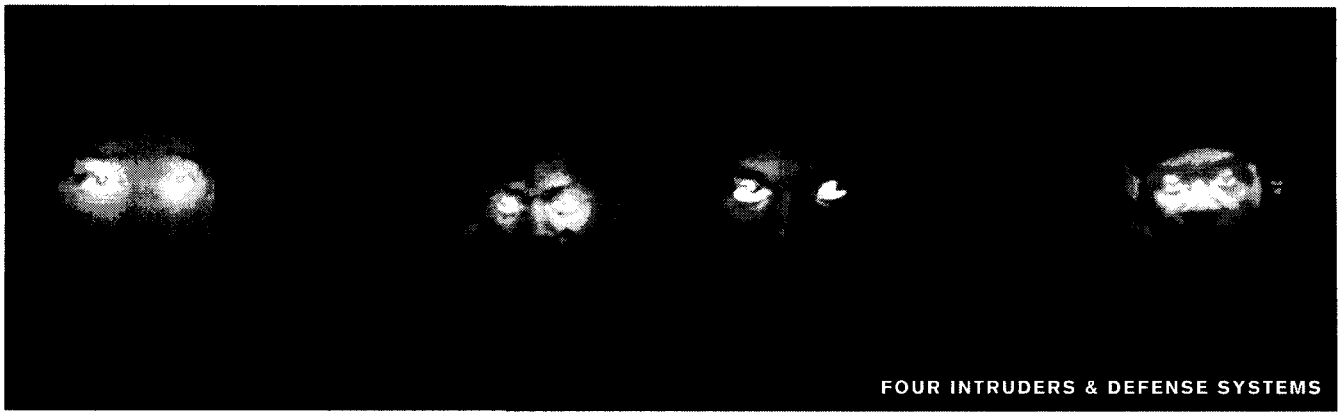

FOUR INTRUDERS & DEFENSE SYSTEMS

TO PIPER'S HORROR, SEVERAL VIEWERS OF FOUR INTRUDERS THANKED HER FOR "EXPRESSING THEIR VIEWS SO ELOQUENTLY."

recoiled from the Mythic Being were not practicing cognitive discrimination. Their reactions were dramatic proof of what Piper calls the "Great Gap"—"the gap between what's actually there and the mediating effects of associations and stereotypes." The *Mythic Being* established the Great Gap as Piper's signature subject and obsession. Moreoever, it helped her to "free myself from my past" and to define herself, without reticence or fear, as a black woman artist. After this, she no longer needed a masquerade.

Piper maintains that she was marginalized by the art world for embracing her black identity: "People just stopped showing up in my life. It was almost a stampede. I became persona non grata." Of course, it would not be surprising if some of Piper's white art friends felt alienated, befuddled, or enraged by her new aesthetic; nor would it come as a shock if some revealed themselves as racists. But the truth is that there was a mutual

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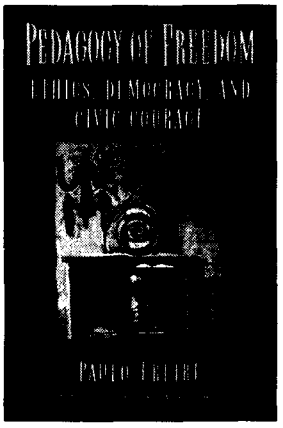

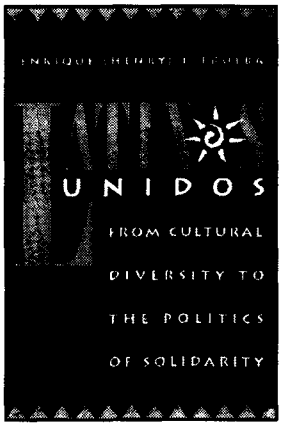

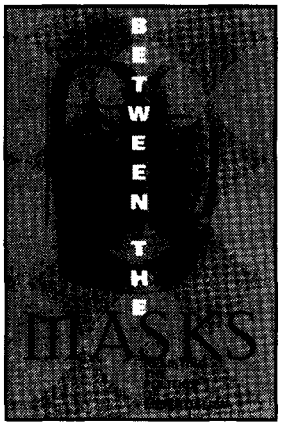

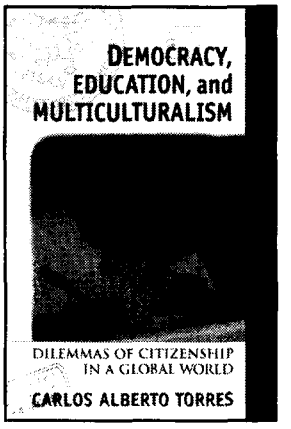

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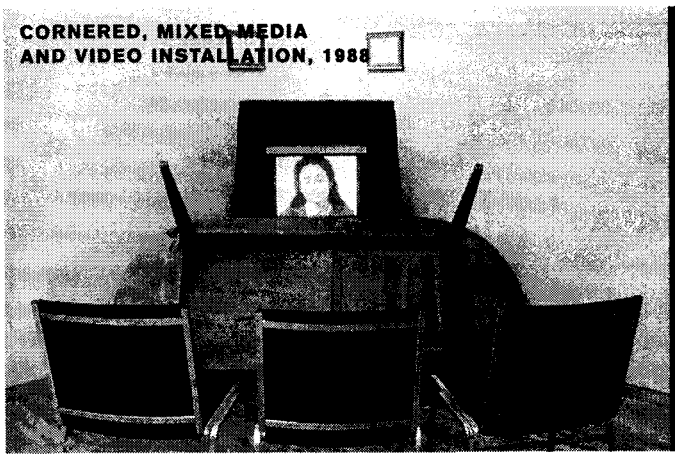

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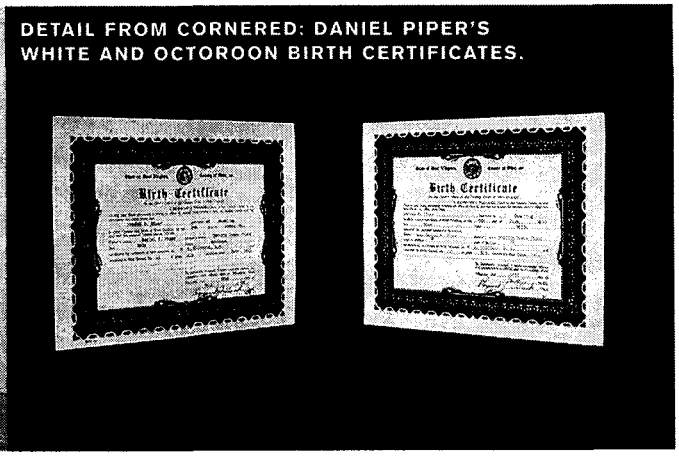

DETAIL FROM CORNERED: DANIEL PIPER'S WHITE AND OCTOROON BIRTH CERTIFICATES.

parting of ways. Piper was living in Cambridge and making fewer trips to New York. She was becoming enraptured by Kant at the very moment that French critics of the Enlightenment like Derrida, Foucault, and Baudrillard were seducing her artist peers.

Not that Piper much cared. At Harvard, she found supportive mentors in the philosophers Raymond Firth and John Rawls (who had published his *Theory of Justice* to great acclaim three years earlier), and she was determined to pursue an academic career. At the same time, she was the lone black woman in the department, and there were stressful encounters of the racist kind. Not long after she arrived, an esteemed philosopher came up to her and quipped, "Miss Piper, you're about as black as I am." (In her *Transition* essay, Piper says this incident "destroyed my illusion that these privileged surroundings were benevolent and safe.")

Piper says she encountered more racism at the University of Michigan, where she got a job in 1979. The department had hired her thinking she was white, and when they found out that she was not, Piper remembers, "their attitude just changed 180 degrees. They got real evil. These guys were so unsympathetic that if I wrote an article and mentioned Descartes's cogito, they'd start pounding me about where he says that in the text and why haven't you provided a footnote. But they made me work at a level of analysis and precision that I would never have had to otherwise. It was a great victory to be denied tenure. Everybody

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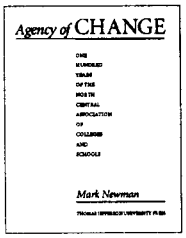

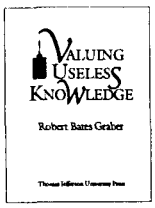

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there knew what was going on." (A source at the University of Michigan declined to comment on her case.)

Fortunately, Piper was able to secure a tenured position at Georgetown, where she taught for several years, but the Michigan experience left her dejected. To make matters worse, Piper's father died, and her four-year-old marriage to a neuropsychologist she had met in Ann Arbor collapsed. And she was experiencing recurring bouts of chronic fatigue syndrome.

Astonishingly, at the same time, Piper was enjoying the most productive phase of her career as an artist. Far from New York City, she was making acerbic works of art that combined intellectual rigor, racial straight-talk, and conceptual elegance. And though her purpose was always to confront and enlighten viewers about race and perception, she approached her audience from a multiplicity of angles and through an array of media.

In installations like *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma* and *Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems*, Piper made some of her sharpest, toughest statements about the stereotyping of black men. The latter work unfolded in a classical conceptual chamber, a black cylindrical room excluding all external light. Inside were four boxes containing enlarged silk-screen photographs of black men (the "four intruders") staring directly at the viewer, their eyes lit from behind. "The effect," as she wrote in her notes, was deliberately "ominous and claustrophobic." In case you felt this wasn't art, in case you felt assaulted by it, in case some of your best friends were black, in case you thought black anger was cool, in case you didn't feel threatened by black men but still didn't want your daughter to marry one, in case you felt unfairly accused of racism—in case you felt any of these things, Piper provided four headphone sets (the "alarm systems"), each playing a first-person monologue that might have just read your mind. If you stayed inside this racial comedy of horrors long enough to examine the "intruders," you would have observed that their expressions were not threatening. But Piper didn't spell this out, intent as she was on illustrating the Great Gap. And so a number of white viewers and critics looked at these four black men, saw that they weren't smiling, and perceived them as "angry."

The viewers may have been guilty of poor cognitive discrimination, but they

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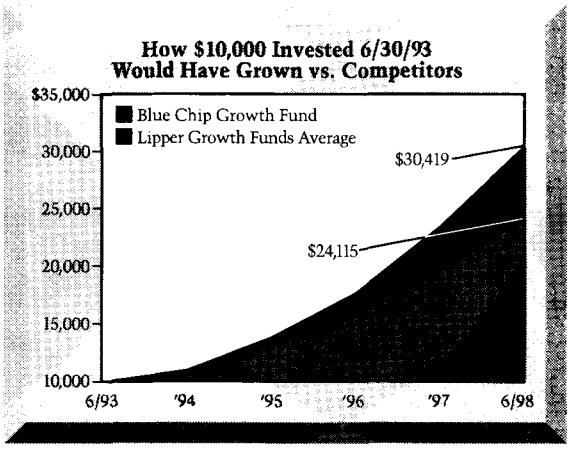

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"IF SOMEONE CAN LOOK AND SOUND LIKE ME AND STILL BE BLACK," SAYS PIPER, "THEN NO ONE IS SAFELY, UNQUESTIONABLY WHITE."

were picking up on something. There was an almost corrosive rage in the works from this period—particularly in the extraordinary series of pieces, beginning with *Political Self-Portraits* and culminating in *Cornered,* in which Piper explored the difficulties of being a black person whom others mistake for white. You might think a white appearance protected her from the worst of white racism, but Piper claims the opposite was true. "Because someone who is visibly black sounds the alarm to white people to be on their best behavior, they never find out what it's like when white people do not have that warning signal, do not have the cue of a black skin to tell them there are certain things they had better not say," Piper told me. "They assume that white people behave in their absence the way white people behave in their presence, and that's just not true!"

In 1986 Piper began passing out a "calling card" at dinner and cocktail parties to whites who, imagining themselves in all-white company, had made remarks that Piper considered racist. The card read:

> Dear Friend,
>
> I am black.
>
> I am sure you did not realize this when you made/laughed at/agreed with that racist remark. In the past, I have attempted to alert white people to my racial identity in advance. Unfortunately, this invariably causes them to react to me as pushy, manipulative, or socially inappropriate. Therefore, my policy is to assume that white people do not make these remarks, even when they believe there are no black people present, and to distribute this card when they do.
>
> I regret any discomfort my presence is causing you, just as I am sure you regret the discomfort your racism is causing me.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Adrian Margaret Smith Piper

Zap! The card uniformly stunned its recipients into silence. "No one who got this card ever initiated dialogue with me," she says. She seems genuinely surprised. Here, once again, Piper believed that shock tactics could force her interlocutors into rational reflection on their own racism.

IN THE LATE 1980s, the New York art world rediscovered Adrian Piper. Amid the sordid dramas of contemporary racial politics, from the killings in Bensonhurst to the Willie Horton ad campaign, Piper's installations about black men and "vanilla nightmares" looked eerily prescient. Multimedia work about identity was flooding galleries and museums, and much of it was indebted to Piper. Her early experiments with masquerade could be seen in Cindy Sherman's coy self-portraiture, while her bracing use of language seemed to prefigure the guerrilla montages of Barbara Kruger. And Piper was especially pleased by the rise of a group of gifted young black artists, notably the painter Glenn Ligon and the photographers Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems, who

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explored issues of identity in a more poetic, searching vein.

In 1987 New York City's Alternative Museum held a twenty-year retrospective of Piper's work. The next year, the John Weber Gallery began to represent her and in the fall of 1990 mounted an exhibit of her recent work. Reviewing the show in the *New York Times*, Michael Brenson proclaimed, "If the fall season in New York can be said to belong to one artist, that artist is Adrian Piper." The following year, Piper's installation *What It's Like, What It Is,* a cousin of *Four Intruders,* was included in MoMA's *Dislocationary Art* show alongside works by Bruce Nauman, Chris Burden, and Louise Bourgeois.

Not all the attention was favorable, however. There were, for example, accusations of racial hectoring from some quarters of the art world. In *Women Artists News*, Barbara Barr railed against Piper's work as "about as racist as anything you can expect to hear these days. It's just the other side of the coin—a grandiosity (and fatalism) about being 'black.'" But the most hostile attack came from a prominent art critic with philosophical training who claimed to respect Piper as an artist and thinker. In a 1987 essay titled "Adrian Piper: Self-Healing Through Meta-Art" published in *Art Criticism,* Donald Kuspit attempted to psychoanalyze not only the work but its maker. While praising Piper's "extraordinary power of articulation," Kuspit portrayed her as a controlling narcissist, "an actress who wants, almost hysterically, every condition for her performance to be just right, including its interpretive aftermath." In Piper's work, wrote Kuspit, "ambiguity and anxiety are resolved through aggression but the aggression is a vicious circle that leads back to them. Piper cannot escape the labyrinth of her spoiled self."

It was a brutal case history, and its subject was furious. In an open letter to Kuspit published in the zine *Real Life Magazine*, Piper dissected his rhetoric, corrected his spelling errors, and offered a damning caricature of Kuspit as a captive of his own *ressentiment.* In the drawing she made to accompany her reply, Piper declared war without mercy on the critic/aggressor. She depicted Kuspit as a beetle, crying in terror as he is sprayed by a can of insecticide labeled "Meta-Art."

It was a powerful, point-by-point rebuttal, but Piper's shock at being psychoanalyzed may reveal a streak of naïveté. For years she had collapsed the boundary between her work and her identity; it was only a matter of time before a critic took the liberty of wandering speculatively from one to the other.

RECENTLY, Piper has taken a hiatus from the art world, devoting herself to philosophy. She has not made a new work since 1995. She spends much of her free time in the house on Cape Cod that she inherited from her parents, and plans to move there permanently after her Getty residency. She lives alone. She tries to fast once a week. Though intellectually gregarious, she is reserved, even fretful, when discussing her personal life. On a good day, she wakes up at 4:30, practices yoga from 5:30 to 8:00, meditates, works for a couple of hours on her manuscript on Kant, has brunch, works some more, and crashes into bed by 9:30 p.m. It is a schedule that leaves little time for a social life. "Adrian is a bit wary of interacting with the world," says one friend. "It is a privilege just to have a phone number or a fax number of her whereabouts. There are always shields or intermediaries." In her own life, Piper's solution to racism has been to insulate herself from unpleasant experiences. It's

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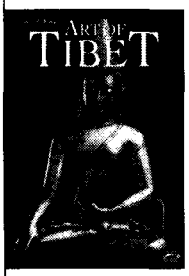

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an understandable choice not to suffer, but it's also, ironically, just the kind of escape she forbids viewers of her art.

Sitting in her Cape Cod backyard in a pair of slacks and a Kant T-shirt, Piper gives the impression of someone who has renounced the outside world for cerebral pursuits. Her study of Kant is as remote as possible from the vanilla nightmares and alarm systems that disrupt her art. "In my heart of hearts, I'm not a very political person," she says. "If I were not forced to fight in order to survive, I'd spend all my time reading, listening to music, and doing yoga." One of the glories of philosophical work, she told me, is that "you leave behind your immediate environment or memories of past environments."

In her manuscript, one thousand pages thick and growing, Piper argues against the Humean claim that we are driven by desire and instinct and that we only use our reason in order to satisfy these unruly impulses. In Piper's view, Kant was right to stress the power of reason not only to trump desire but to define rational ends. It's a surprising argument coming from an artist who has relentlessly paid tribute to the power of irrational forces over the human mind. It's also something of a leap of faith. Kant, she explained to me, must be right, because if he were not, "Racism would not be amenable to rational reflection or analysis." I suggested that there might be insuperable conflict between the rational optimism of her philosophy and the racial pessimism of her artwork. She replied, "Not really. I feel our capacity, the human capacity, is infinite. We're a great mystery. I believe we have the capacity to get through this. The problem is we don't have the will.

"I address my work to people who know that any event can be the subject of reflection. And coming up against my work, having it press all those deeply conditioned buttons, that can be a subject of reflection. I know there are people who are ready for that kind of experience. They're not in the majority, but I know they are there."

Adam Shatz is the editor of the Lingua Franca Book Review. **His article "The American Earthquake: Mike Davis and the Politics of Disaster" appeared in the September 1997 issue of *LF*.**

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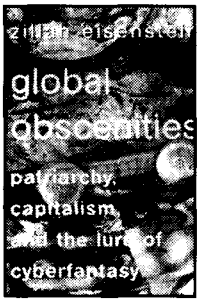

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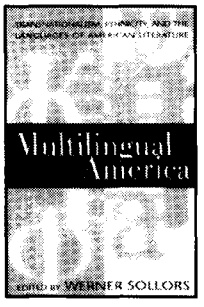

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THE SECOND SEX AND THE DISMAL SCIENCE

THE RISE OF FEMINIST ECONOMICS

BY **MICHAEL STEINBERGER**

BY ANY MEASURE, MARGARET REID WAS A GIANT AMONG ECONOMISTS. Long before the economics of the home was deemed worthy of analysis by most of her peers, Reid did pathbreaking studies on the division of labor and consumption of goods within the household. That these topics are now the focus of some of the most innovative research in economics is a powerful tribute to Reid, who died in 1991 at the age of ninety-five. Yet seldom has such a distinguished career received so little acclaim. While colleague after colleague at the University of Chicago—Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, Theodore Schultz, George Stigler—was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics, Reid never brought home a single major gong. Asked once why this was the case, Schultz caustically noted that "not everyone is born with a silver spoon."

To many of her admirers, however, the real problem was that Margaret Reid wasn't born with a penis, and, as they see it, the story of her professional life—first-rate scholarship, second-class status—is emblematic not just of the way mainstream economics treats its female practitioners but of the value it places on women generally. But now, almost three decades after it started shaking up college campuses, feminism has at last unleashed its deconstructive powers on the world of supply-and-demand curves. Feminist economics, a curious amalgam of Adam Smith and Eleanor Smeal, David Ricardo and Jacques Derrida, has arrived. From quiet rumblings on the fringes of several economics conferences in the late 1980s, feminist economics has evolved into a full-blown insurrection, complete with its own organization (the International Association for Feminist Economists, or IAFFE), its own journal (*Feminist Economics*), and its own manifesto (*Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory and Economics*). Last spring, economists Susan Feiner and Deborah Levison inaugurated one of the first graduate-level courses in the subject at the University of Minnesota; they hope to repeat the course at a different university every year.

Of course, within the feminist-economic community, there is much debate over just how much and by what means the discipline should be overhauled. But about the big picture most feminist economists agree: The unfailingly rational Homo economicus, far from being some harmless abstraction, is an implicit statement of purpose—economics for men, by men, and primarily about men. Rank and file economists, these women charge, are guilty of an intellectual machismo—what the University of Iowa's Deirdre McCloskey calls "a boys' game in the sandbox"—that has made economics inhospitable to women and insensitive to women's issues. Policy concerns in general are shunned, the feminists complain, while recreational math, most of it as irrelevant as it is dense, thrives. "I'm not interested in getting more women into economics just to do the same, sterile work that men do," declares Myra Strober, an economist at the Stanford University School of Education. "I want people grappling with the real economic problems that are out there."

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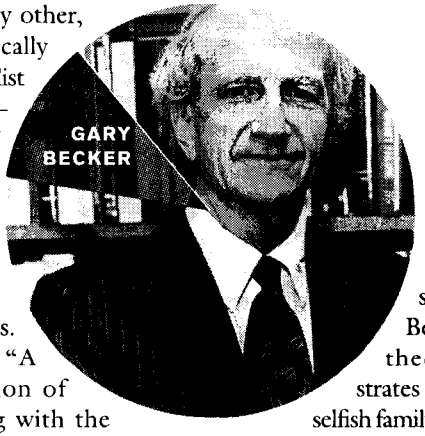
FOR YEARS, the economic profession paid little attention to women's concerns. That began to change in the mid-1960s, when the University of Chicago's Gary Becker started to apply the new methods of rational choice theory (which assumes a world of rational, self-motivated actors) to household labor and women's work. Becker's New Home Economics eventually won him a Nobel Prize. And in recent years, his work has served as an inspiration—and, more frequently, as a target—for feminists.

Even Becker's harshest critics usually preface their diatribes by paying tribute to his brilliance and ingenuity. As controversial as he is unconventional, Becker has theorized the causes and consequences of criminal behavior (individuals who rob banks or steal cars do so because they believe the potential rewards outweigh the proximate risk), addiction (likewise, a deliberate decision), and discrimination (a preference like any other, but one that is economically inefficient under the capitalist system, which suggests—although Becker himself does not claim this—that market forces will, over time, eliminate it).



Becker's work on marriage and the family proceeds from similar premises. Starting in 1965 with "A Theory of the Allocation of Time," and culminating with the publication of "Human Capital and the Rise and Fall of Families" in 1986, Becker brought the household into the neoclassical orbit. Employing the same tools that other economists use to explain the interaction between buyers and sellers and using the free market as a model, he sought to account for the behavior of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters.

Under Becker's neoclassical gaze, marriage became just another investment: Couples tie the knot because they believe that merging will confer greater dividends than remaining single; similarly, couples divorce when they receive less from marriage than they expected. Kids, like marriage, are also an investment. People procreate or adopt, according to Becker, if they are confident the gains will outweigh the costs. If, for example, a third child will strain the household budget and diminish the quality of care for Tom and Dick, their parents, being rational, will choose not to add little Harry to the mix. (On the other hand, couples may decide that the pleasure of having a third child outweighs the added financial burden.)

In sum, the Beckerite family is like a small factory, investing in itself and producing a number of basic goods and services that might not fetch a price on the market—such as sleep—but that nevertheless are subject to the laws of supply and demand. As with any firm, the family obligations to deploy its resources as efficiently as possible in order to generate the best returns—in health, wealth, and happiness—for its members. To maximize efficiency, the household designates an authority figure, who acts in everyone's best interest: the benevolent dictator. He, or she, is altruistic—willing to act in the interest of all family members—because such behavior guarantees that the home will function smoothly. Likewise, Becker's "rotten-kid theorem" demonstrates that even the most selfish family member will turn cooperative because he or she stands to benefit from the largesse that the altruistic parent is at liberty to dispense.

But even more critical than the altruistic parent to family efficiency is the sexual division of labor. Becker contends that an equitable distribution of household chores is not terribly productive; specialization is better. Men have a comparative advantage in the workplace because they generally command higher wages than women. Thus, the family unit is more effective when the husband goes to the office and the wife tends to the home. When the wife does work outside the house, her career inevitably suffers because maternity leave and family obligations decrease the amount of time she is able to spend, relative to her male colleagues, cultivating her skills—in other words, investing in her "human capital." One way out of this dilemma, Becker hints, might be polygamy: This would increase the demand for women in the marriage market, giving them more bargaining power with prospective husbands. In addition, although Becker does not say this explicitly, as a member of a harem, a woman's share of household responsibilities would presumably decline, freeing her up to pursue other interests, such as a professional career outside the home.

It is ideas like these that have made Becker bashing a favorite sport of feminist economists. Colgate University economist Ulla Grapard credits Becker with being the first economist to "address issues of time and money which are crucial if you want to talk theoretically about women's unpaid labor." But, she adds, "The world he wants to explain is the world of the 1950s, the world of the Flintstones and the Jetsons. For Becker, the family is unchanging, whereas feminists would say that the family is historically contingent."

Even within the terms of his timeless model, Becker's critics maintain, his reasoning is troublingly circular: Women earn less in the labor market because they stay at home—and they stay at home because they earn less in the labor market. His theory of the altruistic parent is derided as too clever by a half. Why, feminists ask, would Becker, the very paragon of a Chicago economist, decide that naked self-interest suddenly stops at the foot of the driveway? And why would he assume that the head of the household—a man, more often than not—would be the altruist? Becker is also condemned for opening the floodgates to legions of acolytes and imitators who, in the view of feminists, have stretched the rational-choice model to even more absurd and offensive lengths. One alleged disciple, Daniel Farber, a law professor at the University of Minnesota, thinks the market can resolve the vexing issue of abortion. In a 1986 article, he proposed a scenario in which all parties to the procedure—including the fetus, whose bargaining power would be measured in potential earnings—bid to determine

BECKER BASHING IS A FAVORITE SPORT OF FEMINIST ECONOMISTS.

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whether or not it goes ahead. "True, those who believe in choice may be disconcerted that such a fundamental choice must be paid for," Farber wrote, "while those who are pro-life may be offended that fetuses must bid for their lives. Still, as Milton Friedman has told us more than once, there's no free lunch."

Then there are the public-policy implications of Becker's work. While the Chicago school is famed for eschewing policy work, feminists note that its investigations of hot-button issues such as discrimination and welfare have had political consequences. After all, the abolition of federal welfare guarantees was predicated on the notion that indigent women, being rational actors, were having children instead of looking for jobs because the welfare system gave them a financial incentive to do so. Many feminists believe that the Beckerites set out to prove that public remedies are futile and then wield the neoclassical tools to get the results they desire.

Above all, however, what irks feminists is the Beckerite presumption that the rational-choice model can adequately account for anyone's—especially women's—experiences. "With the rational-choice model," says economist Barbara Bergmann, a professor emerita at American University, "the tendency is to simplify. The more elements you include, the harder it is to draw conclusions. But when it comes to divorce, marriage, fertility, and equality, you need rich models. Becker's methodology is biased against that. If you really wanted to have a serious discussion about fertility, you wouldn't just draw supply and demand curves."

Becker remains unfazed by most of the criticism. In fact, he applauds the feminist economists for stimulating additional interest in family issues and other long-neglected topics. He has even agreed to join some of his feminist detractors in a panel discussion, "Implementing Gender Equality," to be held in New York City this January at the annual meeting of the American Economic Association. Of course, Becker doesn't expect to hear anything that will change his mind. When it comes to the substance of his work, he isn't giving an inch. He believes the rational-choice model, warts and all, remains the best device around for understanding household dynamics and workplace discrimination and says no theoretical or empirical concoctions have persuaded him otherwise. "It's a useful way of looking at the world," he says. "I don't think it is stacked against women."

Critics, he suggests, confuse analysis with advocacy. He doesn't argue that the sexual division of labor is just, he insists, only that it is more efficient. He says his views on polygamy have been similarly distorted: "I didn't say, 'Let's welcome it back.' But why have we had so much polygamy throughout history? I've looked at this as a scientific question, and science has to challenge, to raise issues people don't like." As Becker sees it, his attackers impugn his motives because they are unable to challenge him on economic grounds. He hotly denies that he is pushing an agenda or guilty of androcentrism: "I've always considered myself a feminist, to the extent that I am concerned about the role of women in society and believe that women should have equal opportunities." Becker's supporters are even less tolerant of the criticism he faces. Shoshana Grossbard-Shechtman, who studied under Becker and now teaches economics at San Diego State University, says he has probably mentored more women than any of his male colleagues at either Chicago or Columbia, where he first taught. People familiar with his personal life note something else: During the 1970s, when Becker was doing some of his most provocative work on the family, he was also raising two teenage daughters—alone.

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by Becker's work, and inspired by feminist scholarship in other disciplines, feminist economists have sought to correct the field's blind spots concerning gender as an economic variable and—more radically—tackle issues directly related to improving women's living conditions.

In a 1997 article in *Feminist Economics,* economists David Colander and Joanna Wayland Woos criticize the assumptions that Becker and other economists have made about the gender wage gap. Because millions of women juggle both careers and family obligations, the neoclassical argument goes, they often work intermittently and so invest less in their own human capital than men. This not only makes it difficult for employers to promote these women, it gives them a reason to pay women less, since they will be less productive than men, whose loyalties are

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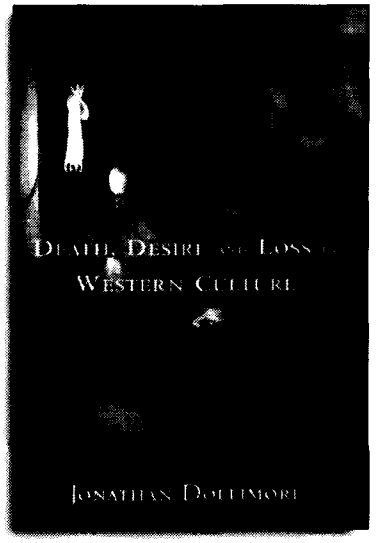

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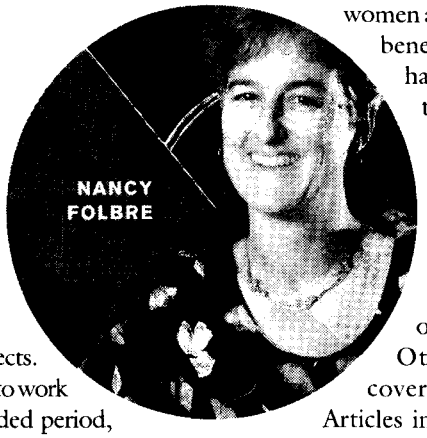

not similarly torn. In short, according to the Beckerites, the wage gap is a supply-side dilemma.

Colander and Woos disagree, and to make their case, they turn the spotlight on the institutional forces at work in a world they know well: academia. In particular, they focus on the tenure process, which they contend is heavily biased against women. Typically, a freshly minted female Ph.D. who manages to find a tenure-track teaching job is in her late twenties or early thirties. Therefore, the seven years leading up to the tenure decision typically coincide with her prime childbearing years. Yet universities and colleges make it very difficult for her to have a family without jeopardizing her career prospects. If, for instance, she opts to work part-time for an extended period, not only is she paid significantly less than her full-time colleagues, but her decision often counts against her when she comes up for tenure. The tenure system, mostly administered by men, is designed mostly to benefit men. In keeping with the ameliorative aims of the feminist economics movement, Colander and Woos not only critique the tenure process but prescribe a remedy. They propose that a number of tenure-track positions in every academic department—perhaps as many as 50 percent of the jobs—be "institutionalized half-time positions," available to both women and men. The pay and benefits would be cut in half, but so would the teaching and research requirements. The pressure to produce would be spread over ten to fifteen years, allowing people to sustain significant outside commitments.

Other feminist work covers a range of topics. Articles in *Feminist Economics* address everything from women's preference for arable land over cash income in South Asia to incentives for considering breast-feeding as a public good. But among the questions preoccupying feminist economists most is one about which there is little internal consensus: whether or not a nation's gross domestic product (GDP) ought to be recalculated to include unpaid labor that is done in the home. Failing to consider such labor can distort a nation's understanding of its economy. For example, it's seldom noted that HMOs' restrictions on the

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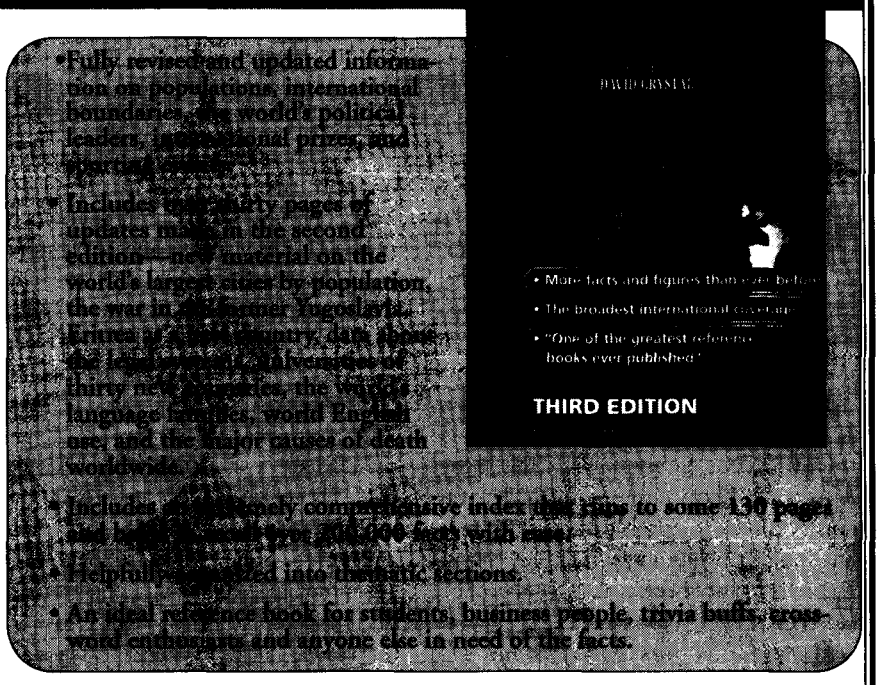

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length of hospital stays may require family members to spend more time caring for loved ones. This unremunerated labor is rarely figured into estimates of how HMOs have lowered the cost of medical care.

Ironically, some of the most outspoken proponents of adding household production to the GDP are men. Robert Eisner, a professor emeritus at Northwestern University, has perhaps done more than any other economist to put a dollar value on American nonmarket labor. He estimates that unpaid housework, as a percentage of GDP, ranged from 45 percent in 1946 to 33 percent as recently as 1981. Eisner's take on the issue is neatly summed up by the title of a short comment he contributed to the fall 1996 issue of *Feminist Economics*: "Measure It to Make It Count." His sentiments were echoed by Australian economist Duncan Ironmonger, writing in the same issue:

> We need a major change in our view of reality, a major change in what needs to be measured, and a major change in our thinking about the way in which families and households participate in economic activity. Households provide as much care, nurture, and maintenance directly, and without recompense, to the members of their own and other households as the whole output of the market economy. The reality of the huge unpaid contribution of households to economic value needs to be accepted; adopted as a benchmark fact, it would change nearly all of our deliberations about economic and social policy.

While the call to count household labor sounds impressive, implementing it is another matter. A handful of industrialized countries, among them Canada and Australia, are now conducting time-use surveys with an eye toward incorporating household production into their official statistics. Some of these countries also provide government subsidies for household work. In assessing that work, bureaucrats must confront several vexing issues. What should count as unpaid labor? Should playing with a child be considered work or leisure? What are the consequences of placing even a hypothetical monetary value on such endeavors? The Canadian government defines unpaid labor as "household work plus formal volunteer work and helping out friends, relatives, and others." It measures the value of these activities in various ways. Meal preparation, for example, is something that is also done by cooks and chefs; the hourly wage they earn is the opportunity cost for a mother or father preparing dinner, free of charge, at home. Canadian officials take the number of hours spent putting food on the table and multiply it by the opportunity cost (in this case, the hourly wage the caregiver would earn if he or she were cooking for money) to derive a value for this particular form of unpaid labor.

Many feminists view these proceedings warily. Writing in *Feminist Economics* in 1995, Nancy Folbre, a MacArthur fellow and economist at the University of Massachusetts, worried that nonmarket work, undervalued in the absence of a price tag, would still be undervalued even if it got one. If the miserly wages that most professional caregivers in this country command set the standard, how will those workers benefit? In the end, Folbre argues for attaching a monetary value to what she calls caring labor but urges caution, lest ham-handed policy makers bungle the job.

More critical is Barbara Bergmann.

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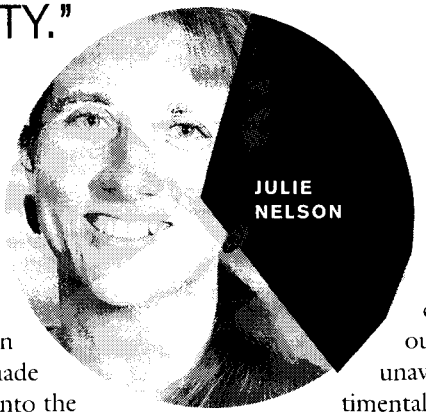
NELSON COMPLAINS THAT THE ECONOMIC PROFESSION HAS BEEN SMOTHERED BY "UNMITIGATED MASCULINITY."



She thinks that adding housework to the GDP would only sanctify the sexual division of labor and undermine the progress women have made in the job market. In her own work, Bergmann has made women's integration into the workplace a central concern. If, Bergmann maintains, it serves men's interests to keep women from climbing the company ladder (the famous glass-ceiling hypothesis), women make it worse by becoming psychologically complicit with their male rivals. After encountering one barrier after another, Bergmann argues, many working women start to rationalize their diminished horizons. They will profess not to mind the low salaries or claim they don't want positions of greater responsibility because this will keep them away from the kids longer. Women thus become their own worst enemies.

Bergmann's solution? Women need to become more like men. In a recent paper titled "The Only Ticket to Equality: Total Androgyny, Male Style," she submits that the male-dominated business world is cutthroat for a reason: Cutthroat pays. Therefore, to have any chance of eliminating "the segregation of the sexes by economic duties," as she puts it, and achieving true parity in the workplace, women must cast aside their traditional household responsibilities and become as aggressive and competitive as men. "High commodification" is the path to liberation: Using personal wealth and generous government subsidies, Bergmann argues, families can employ outsiders (of both sexes) to do all the cooking, cleaning, and child rearing that women have traditionally done.

Bergmann says the plan is less radical than it sounds; many of these services are already being outsourced because women want time to pursue their own ambitions and men generally don't pick up the slack. She admits that going the whole way will entail significant costs, particularly for children, but points out that trade-offs are unavoidable and that sentimentality is a luxury women can ill afford if they are serious about equality: "Half of those children are girls, so a rather nice childhood is being sacrificed for a rather better adulthood."

While Bergmann's brand of liberal feminism would encourage women to act more like men in the workplace, some of her colleagues are more concerned with changing the economics profession itself. In the view of feminists—and many other members of the discipline—economics today is a field utterly divorced from reality in which elegant algebraic equations have become virtually an end in themselves. By way of proof, Nelson quotes from a 1990 speech in which Nobel Prize winner Gérard Debreu declared that the best papers concerning economic theory succeed in "removing all their economic interpretations and letting their mathematical infrastructure stand on its own." Other feminists cite a 1987 survey in which just 3 percent of economics graduate students felt that having broad knowledge of the economy was "very important" to their education; problem-solving skills and an aptitude for fancy math were rated much more valuable.

Influenced by postmodern and feminist critiques of science, economists like Brandeis University's Julie Nelson and Rice University's Diana Strassmann have linked the math-for-math's sake attitude that dominates the field to the androcentric biases of the Western tradition. In *Beyond Economic Man* (Chicago, 1993), Nelson complains that the entire discipline has been smothered by an "unmitigated masculinity.... Nature, childhood, bodily needs,

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DEIRDRE McCLOSKEY KNOWS FIRSTHAND THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A MALE ECONOMIST.

and human connectedness, cut off from the 'masculine' concern in the Cartesian split, remain safely out of the limelight."

MOST feminists would not go this far. They are not hell-bent on destroying the neoclassical edifice, nor are they advocating a separate-but-equal Femina economica. Rather, though they readily concede that the rational-choice model is ideal for many topics that fall within the field's purview, they believe there are other areas of economics for which it is not suitable. Folbre, for example, believes that the rational choice theory can generate useful hypotheses in some cases but that its assumptions are too simplistic and often just wrong: "The things that it assumes are constant—tastes, assets, institutions, and rules—are the things that are most likely to change." She would like to see the profession's leaders acknowledge these limitations and open the door to methodologies that provide a fuller, more accurate account of human impulses. If insights can only be conveyed using words, rather than numbers, so be it; in their view, it will make economics a better, more objective science, one that is friendlier to women and more relevant to their lives.

In fact, there is a strong case to be made that this is already happening. Certainly, it is harder to argue these days that mainstream economics suffers from tunnel vision. The growing interest in empirical research and experimental economics is helping restore to the field the breadth it once enjoyed. While rationality, greed, and equilibrium are still at the heart of many models, far more fashionable are those that attempt to offer a more nuanced account of marketplace situations. In the view of most economists, these innovations represent a refinement of the neoclassical approach, not a repudiation of it. For instance, George Akerlof, who teaches at Berkeley, has tackled some of the same issues raised by Becker but in a way that many people find more plausible. In a 1996 paper in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Akerlof, together with Janet Yellen and Michael Katz, modeled the effects of legalized abortion and the invention of the pill on fertility and marriage rates in the United States. Their results, these economists argued, suggest that "technology shocks" (such as the pill) rather than an overly generous welfare system have been the chief reason for the rise in out-of-wedlock births over the past few decades. Easy access to contraception sparked a revolution in sexual mores, which led to the destigmitization of out-of-wedlock childbirth. The solution, these writers argue, is not to take the technology off the market or slash welfare payments (the Beckerite remedy, and one whose burden has clearly fallen hardest on women) but, rather, to make it very costly for fathers to shirk responsibility for their kids.

Becker's conception of marriage has also been challenged from inside the mainstream camp. Influenced by economist Amartya Sen, many economists have emphasized the importance of cooperation—and not just of conflict—to provide a more persuasive account of household interaction. In this approach, there is no benevolent dictator; instead, couples bargain over household matters and cooperate only when it serves their own interests. Bargaining power is mainly determined by the strength of an individual's fallback option—how well he or she will fare if cooperation fails. Conflict arises because housework is frequently a zero-sum proposition: Someone gains at another's expense. If you take out the garbage, we both benefit, but only you have had to expend time and energy on handling a smelly trash bag.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ALICE RIVLIN, JANET YELLEN, LAURA TYSON.

DESPITE such important work on issues they care passionately about, feminists insist the profession has a long way to go. And some of their evidence is indisputable. They point to the discipline's lackluster statistics on recruitment. In 1970, only 11 percent of economics majors were women. Two decades later, women accounted for 30 percent of the total—a solid gain, to be sure, but pedestrian compared to other disciplines (by the early 1990s, for instance, nearly half of all math majors were women). And even though the Clinton administration has catapulted several women economists—including Rebecca Blank, Laura Tyson, Yellen, and Alice Rivlin—into influential government positions, their prominence obscures the bleak reality of the academic trenches: In 1994 women filled only 5 percent of the full professorships and only 10 percent of all existing faculty positions in economics.

Meanwhile, some feminist economists complain that the focus of their work hinders their progress in the field. In 1991 Diana Strassmann, the editor of *Feminist Economics*, was denied tenure at Rice University, in part, she alleges, because her work had taken a heterodox turn toward feminism and postmodern theory. "My colleagues in economics did not much value my work in feminist economics," she says—a charge the Rice economics department denies. Bill Brown, who was chair at the time, explains that halfway through her assistant professorship Strassmann changed her focus from traditional economic analysis to feminist economics. "The decision had nothing to do with the subject," he says. "It was the switch that cost her. It's not that there was a complete lack of enthusiasm for what she was doing. There just wasn't enough payoff." In 1992, an internal

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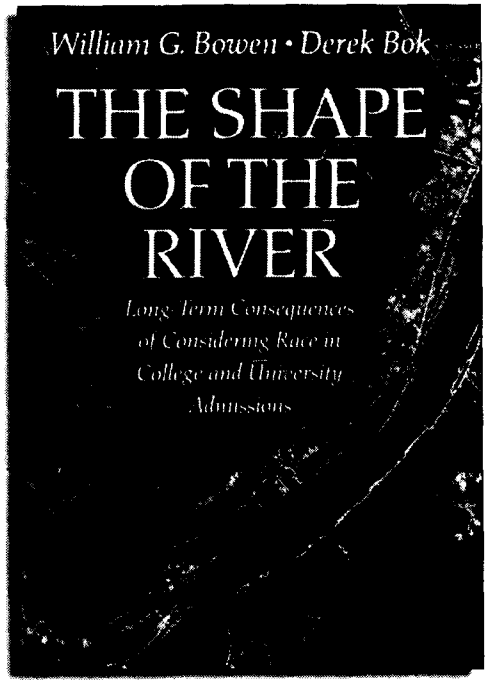
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review committee recommended Strassmann for a nonteaching position as a senior research fellow at the Rice Center for the Study of Cultures. Since assuming her new position, Strassmann says the university has been very supportive of her efforts—including *Feminist Economics*, to which the university has given money.

MORE striking is the case of the University of Iowa's Deirdre McCloskey, who, unlike her feminist precursor Margaret Reid, knows firsthand the advantages of being an economist with a penis. Born a man, and formerly a member of the Chicago faculty, McCloskey (then Donald) didn't have the stature of a Becker or a Friedman but was nevertheless highly regarded in the discipline, mainly for his work in the area of economic history and philosophy. During the 1980s, worried about the direction the field was heading, he began to stray from the mainstream. In 1985, he put his concerns to paper with a book, The Rhetoric of Economics, which charted the profession's decline into pointless theorem proving. The book was hugely influential, winning praise from scholarly journals and popular publications alike, most notably The New York Review of Books.

McCloskey's hard-hitting critique anticipated many of the arguments now made by feminist economists, and he was instrumental in getting the movement off the ground. But three years ago, Donald underwent a sex-change operation and emerged as Deirdre. McCloskey, who has been very open about the decision, fears that it has diminished her influence. She notes that her new book, *The Vices of Economists, the Virtues of the Bourgeoisie* (Michigan), has received just one review, compared to the fifty or so that were lavished on *The Rhetoric of Economics.*

Could it be that feminist economics still needs a male éminence grise to make its mark on the profession? Julie Nelson certainly thinks so. Speaking of McCloskey, Nelson says, "I am happy to have her. Politically, I was happier to have him."

Michael Steinberger has written for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and other publications. His article, "The China Syndrome," appeared in the May/June issue of *LF*.

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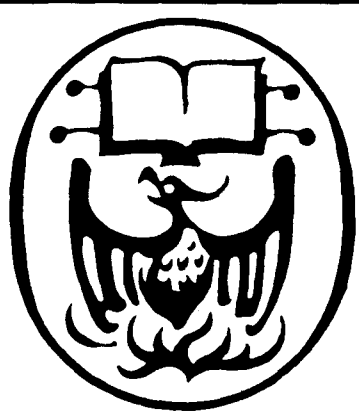

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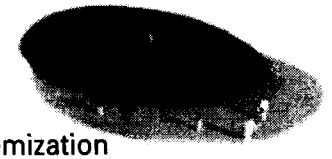

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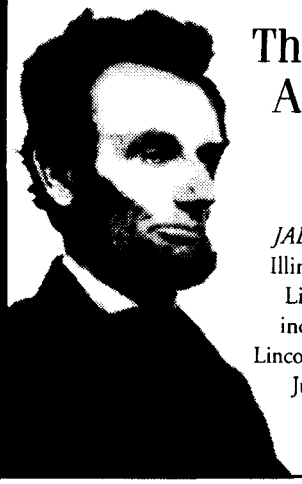

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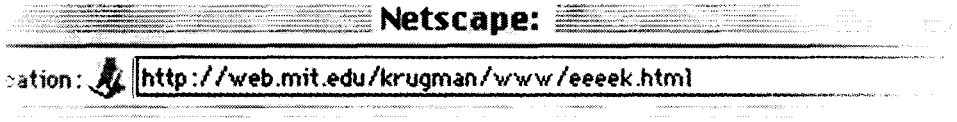
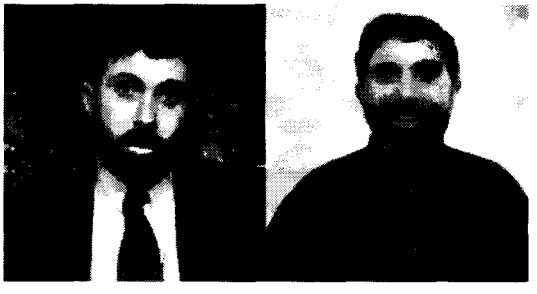
AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO FACULTY WEB SITES

BY **VICKI HSUEH**

WHEN IT COMES TO CYBERCULTURE, ACADEMICS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN the vanguard. Visionaries like Sherry Turkle, Allucquere Rosanne Stone, and Nicholas Negroponte were preaching the gospel of the electronic, the virtual, and the digital back in the early 1990s, when the scope and importance of the Internet were just starting to dawn on people. But has practice kept up with theory? Can the Net be more than just a bulletin board for CVs and course syllabi? To find out, *Lingua Franca* decided to explore the ivory towers of cyberspace, hoping to see how the professoriat presents itself on-line. Herewith, a preliminary investigation into a little-appreciated new literary genre: the faculty Web site.

Prolific MIT economist **Paul Krugman** proclaimed in a recent issue of the magazine *Red Herring* that "by 2005 or so, it will become clear that the Internet's impact on the economy has been no greater than the fax machine's." But that hasn't stopped him from making extensive use of it. The Web, the international-trade theorist maintains, "makes vanity-press publishing simple, cheap, and fast." He adds, "We all know that a bit of self-promotion is essential."





To that end, The Official Paul Krugman Web Page provides an on-line archive of scores of his articles from both mainstream and academic publications. True, its design is simple, but the site lacks neither humor nor personality. From the very first, viewers are solicited with an unabashed "Buy my book!" and are later treated to photos of Krugman garbed in his *Frontline* pundit-wear and relaxing in his everyday MIT gear. Krugman fairly bubbles with enthusiasm when discussing his site. The Web, he raves (despite his published opinions), has been "a roaring success. I get *lots* of feedback."

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Netscape: Personal Self-Indulgence

http://www.swarthmore.edu/Humanities/sforres1/pers.html

While **Sibelan Forrester** admits that her Web-page-making skills are far from "expert," establishing a unique and individual identity on the Web does not seem to have been much of a problem for the Swarthmore College Russian professor. Although her Web site does serve as a handy academic resource for her Slavic studies students, she peppers the college-sponsored site with what she describes as "personal self-indulgences." Swarthmoreans on-line might be a little shocked to see photos of an unguarded Forrester administering back massages or to see her musing on the efficacy of tarot card readings, but Forrester seems completely comfortable with her casual on-line portrait.

After all, she explains, "Say a graduate student in Minnesota wants to ask me a question, and she checks the Web page. She'll have a pretty good idea of who I am—almost better than if we'd chatted for five minutes at some reception at a conference." And as much as Forrester is genuinely interested in creating productive intellectual relationships with shy students, she also believes that the Web provides welcome distraction from the sometimes lonely life of an academic. "Having a sort of sassy personal section to my page made me feel as if that part of my character was still alive. Hell, I even had a guy send me chocolates once! For that alone, it was worth it."

Netscape: Tim Scholl

http://www.oberlin.edu/~tscholl/

When Oberlin College professor **Timothy Scholl** was asked to create Web pages for the college's German and Russian departments, the young instructor found himself "a bit stymied. In typically bohemian Oberlin fashion," he says, "the college did not provide a template, in the hope that each department or faculty member would come up with a more or less unique page." Scholl set about posting the requisite CVs, syllabi, research interests, and scholarly resources. But one night, in what he describes as "a fit of work avoidance and pique," he composed "The New Faculty Discount Shopping Guide"—a gossipy, dirt-dishing, tell-all survey of clothing finds in the Oberlin area.

The guide is jump-started with a rousing paean to the glories of shopping excerpted from Daniel Harris's *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture*, but soon moves on to the real shopping scoops. And Scholl's consumerist bird's-eye view misses nothing. He gushes over Cleveland's Hugo Boss Factory Outlet—"reason enough to live in Northern Ohio." But he also devotes space to the bargain-basement Value City on Elyria Road: "Some faculty members go here in disguise, *but they all go*!"

Netscape: Duke English: Faculty

http://www.duke.edu/web/english/faculty/facnew.html

If you expected the Duke English department faculty Web site to be unorthodox, you wouldn't be disappointed. English professor and director of undergraduate studies **Ronald R. Butters**, author of *The Death of Black English* and co-editor of *Displacing Homophobia*, welcomes incoming Duke freshmen in decidedly dressed-down fashion. Lounging bare-chested and carefree, sporting sunglasses and an easy-going grin, Butters could not be more relaxed. Fellow Duke English professor **Jane Gaines** forgoes photographs of herself altogether, preferring instead to illustrate her academic interests in Hollywood and period costume with an image of Marlene Dietrich. Gaines says: "I would have loved to have been Marlene Dietrich and I had no photos of myself handy. The department was completely accepting about it."

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On the opening page of **Cornell University's Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Studies** Web site, La Dietrich waggles her Javascript cigarette flirtatiously, taunting the viewer with a tongue-in-cheek "What's your preference?" Here the question refers to modem speed, not sexuality. Nonetheless, your response automatically labels you. Those burdened with a slow modem are characterized as "Very, very plain" but better-equipped surfers, Dietrich's preference, are "So very, very." Isabel Chang, the site's student designer, says she "envisioned something very playful, a little kitschy, and very glam for the site, because the site should always reflect the content." In fact, Chang's Web practice matches her critical theory in more ways than one. One of the site's subtler effects is an outing metaphor built into its design. Dragging the cursor across a mosaic of photographic images of gay and lesbian icons causes them to disappear, revealing a set of labeled navigation buttons. But unlike at most Web sites, moving the mouse elsewhere on the page does not restore the original images. There's no going back into the closet.

Chang contends that "it is a significant and prominent choice that one has to make, whether to reveal one's secret to the world, to the family, to friends...and the site's navigation reflects this kind of 'no turning back.'"

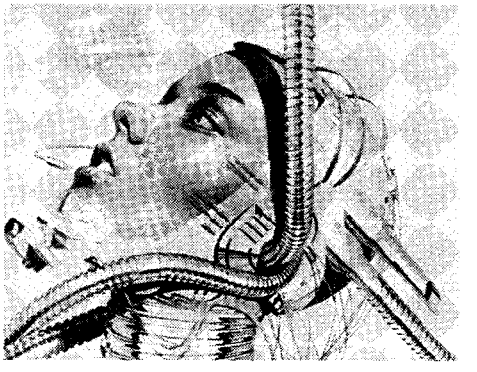
Netscape: Cornell University. Lesbian, Bisexual, & Gay Studies

http://www.arts.cornell.edu/lbg/high.htm

Netscape: Paul Smith, prestidigitation

Location: http://mason.gmu.edu/~psmith5/

When **Paul Smith**, professor of English and cultural studies, decided to bring his scholarly work on pornography, censorship, and North American capitalism to the electronic highway, he found that expression on the Internet does have its limits—especially when the Web server is owned by his employer, George Mason University. To the dismay of some in the George Mason academic community, the first things Smith posted were five sexually explicit images of, among other things, "a nude woman in chains, a nude man with an erection, and a man and woman engaged in anal intercourse." In response to complaints, GMU administrators invoked a recent Virginia law that prohibited state employees from using state-owned computer equipment to access, download, print, or store any information files or services having sexually explicit content. Following the law, the university blocked all access to Smith's uncaptioned images. And the university systems operator removed other images from Smith's site, including photos of porn superstar Traci Lords, a subject of the professor's research on the relationship between pornography and capitalism. "Outright censorship," protested Smith, from "a fucking silly law."



The professor decided to fight back, joining *Urofsky et al.* vs. *Allen*, a First Amendment lawsuit brought by six Virginia professors against Virginia's Republican governor, George Allen. Federal District Judge Leonie M. Brinkman found that the legislation unconstitutionally curbed free speech and on-line academic research. "At stake," she wrote in her decision, "is the ability of more than 101,000 public employees at all levels of state government to read, research, and discuss sexually explicit topics within their areas of expertise. This includes inquiry and debate by academics in the fields of art, literature, medicine, psychology, anthropology, and law."

In the wake of the ruling, Traci Lords is back on-line, along with Smith's caustic account of "the whole sordid story." "The law," he writes, exhibited "all the attention to individual rights and legal niceties that you'd expect from...those totally asinine conservative moralizers whom the people of Virginia mysteriously see fit to have represent them."

Vicki Hsueh is a graduate student in political science at Johns Hopkins and a former *LF* intern.

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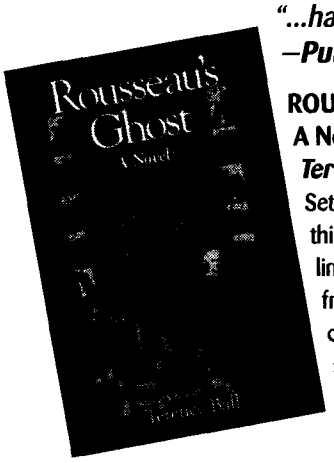

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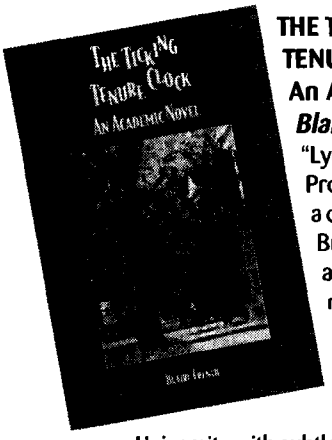

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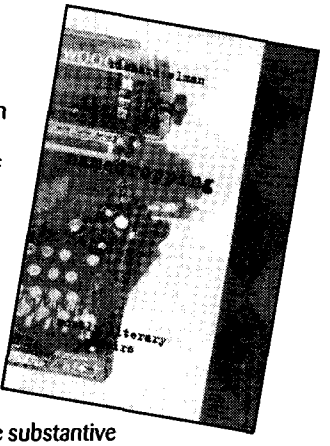

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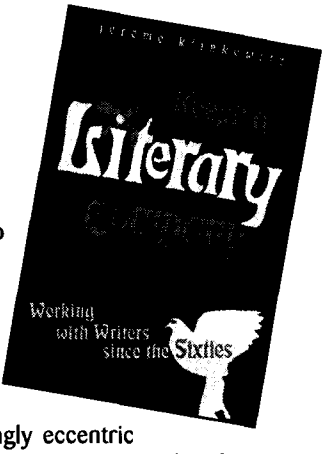

"In *Keeping Literary Company,* Klinkowitz relates in an engaging style how he came to know certain writers he considers to be the most interesting innovators in fiction: Vonnegut, on whom he has written several books; the fascinating mountebank Jerzy Kosinski; the endearingly eccentric Donald Barthelme; avant-gardists Ronald Sukenick and Raymond Federman; the sublime Gilbert Sorrentino; and the enigmatic Clarence Major. Through well-chosen anecdotes Klinkowitz demonstrates how familarity with these authors led him to better understand their narrative strategies, techniques and tonalities. *Keeping Literary Company* is thus as much a work of criticism as it is literary history and should prove invaluable to future scholars of those authors' works."
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continued from page 7

tion between Diderot and the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler," in which Diderot was humiliated by Euler's "stunning" use of mathematics to derive a proof of God. Problem: It never took place. Jacques Barzun and Henry Graff, in *The Modern Researcher*, use this story to caution budding scholars on the ease with which juicy stories supplant historical fact.

The truth is interesting but considerably less dramatic. While Diderot was visiting Catherine the Great's palace in Moscow, some disgruntled courtiers grew suspicious of his influence and arranged for him to be challenged in aggressive terms: "Sir, $a+b^n/z=x$. Therefore, God exists. Reply." Barzun and Graff: "Diderot, suspecting a put-up job and sensing the hostility to his presence, did not reply. Told and retold, this supposed dumbfounding of the learned man grew into a tale of confrontation with the great Euler," a confrontation in which Diderot was supposedly shamed by his woefully deficient mathematical understanding. In fact, Diderot published "competent and original" mathematical work, and we have no reason to think he couldn't recognize an absurd non-sequitur when he saw it.

One of the virtues of logic as a system of authoritative suasion is that its systemic flaws—fallacies—are relatively easy to discover and correct. They are publicly ostensive, visible within the argument itself. Not so the distortions, half-truths, dramatic embellishments, and outright mythologizing to which narrative is especially prone.

ERIC ZENCEY, EAST CALAIS, VT

CASTLES IN THE AIR

I was intrigued by Alexander Stille's provocative article on cyberarchitecture ["Invisible Cities," July/August]. But one omission puzzled me. In Eleana Kim's sidebar surveying five leading architecture schools—and, for that matter, throughout the article—there was almost no mention of the benefits these fancy media developments might offer students of architecture, only discussion of the careers of a few trend-setters. It would have been useful to discuss what the costs are to a beginning student's spatial sense and potential creativity when a three-dimensional discipline is replaced, from the very start, with a series of abstract two-dimensional coordinates on a screen—regardless of what fashionable computer program is used or what fancy French cultural critic is invoked.

"Paperless" or "model-less" studios cannot liberate the spatial imagination if there is no foundation in three-dimensional spatial literacy in the first place, no building blocks that students can learn to manipulate.

It is conventional wisdom that our skylines, and even our modest everyday places, owe more to the ordinary, conscientious non-genius with an architecture degree than to the theorist—and it is by no means clear how our professional schools of architecture (already clogged with words that lack referents in the real world) will equip such a person to serve the challenges of the next century.

IVAN ZAKNIC
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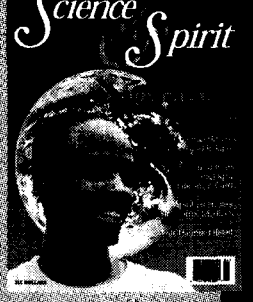

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University of Delaware–Hagley Fellowships cover tuition for courses at the University and provide for yearly stipend of around $10,000. Fellowships may be renewed once for those seeking a terminal master's degree and three times beyond the initial year for those seeking the doctorate. University of Delaware–Hagley Fellows also receive support for travel to conferences, archives, and museums.

Application for a University of Delaware–Hagley Fellowship can be made through the Coordinator, University of Delaware–Hagley Program, Department of History, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716. (302) 831–8226. The deadline for receipt of complete applications is January 30.

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The State University of New York at Stony Brook announces its 1998 Philosophy Colloquium, "Interpretation." Speakers will include the following: Jerome Bruner (NYU) Owen Flanagan (Duke), Manfred Frank (Tübingen), Sue Larson (Columbia-Barnard), Joseph Margolis (Temple) and Joseph Rouse (Wesleyan). For further information, please contact Interpretation Colloquium, Philosophy Department, SUNY-SB, Stony Brook, NY 11794-3570; Fax (516) 632-7522; e-mail pgrim@ccmail.sunysb.edu. Information is also available on the web at www.sunysb.edu/philosophy/interp.htm

Stony Brook, NY; December 4–6, 1998

PHILOSOPHY AND THE FEMININE

Why does philosophy continue to be a male-dominated discipline? What role have masculinity and neutrality played in constituting it as a discipline? What role has the feminine played, and why? How might the concerns that feminists are now bringing forward change how philosophy is done? We intend the conference to be an expression of the plurality of women's voices in philosophy today and as a forum for dialogue across various traditions and between various schools of thought. Topics to be discussed include femininity and divinity, feminist political philosophy, feminist epistemology and philosophy of science, feminist ontology. Speakers include Drucilla Cornell, Naomi Scheman, Iris Marion Young. Contact: Anne O'Byrne, Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University, Nashville TN 37240. Ph: (615) 292-6560. E-mail: anne.obyrne@vanderbilt.edu

Nashville, TN; January 29–31, 1999

EXPLORING THE BLACK ATLANTIC

The Black Atlantic Project at Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis solicits papers from scholars exploring the black experience in Africa, Europe, and the Americas. We welcome papers from scholars who investigate issues of race, nation and gender, and whose work interrogates the very meaning of the Black Atlantic. Papers can be explicitly international and comparative, or they can focus on the national experiences of particular black communities that shed light on themes common to the Black Atlantic world. Send papers by December 15, 1998 to: Deborah Gray White and Mia Bay, Project Directors, Center for Historical Analysis, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 88 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901-8542 USA.

New Brunswick, NJ; April 8–10, 1999

CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE SELF

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Hypotheses

DEATH WISH

Do our cells want to commit suicide?

IN 1929 JAMES THURBER AND E.B. White asked, "Is sex necessary?" Seven decades later the answer remains shrouded in mystery. We have, however, made some progress on a related question: Is death necessary? The answer appears to be yes—because of sex.

For the first billion years after life appeared on earth, death was a contingent thing. The single-celled organisms that existed back then were essentially immortal. They reproduced over and over again by fission. Given enough food and protection from predators, they never died.

Only when sex entered the picture did death become inescapable. Living things that reproduce sexually have two kinds of cells. *Germ* cells, which give rise to sperm and ova, pass their DNA on to the next generation. *Somatic* cells, though required for sexual reproduction to take place, do not. The cells in our muscles and brains and hearts and lungs and just about everywhere else are somatic. The DNA in these somatic cells controls their day-to-day operations. Over time, however, this somatic DNA accumulates errors in the form of mutations—errors that make the genetic material not just irrelevant but harmful. That is why every somatic cell has embedded in it a self-destruct program—a death gene. After a certain predetermined span, the cell stops dividing and commits suicide.

The DNA in germ cells, by contrast, is destined to be implanted in another organism. Not surprisingly, these cells have lots of DNA-repair enzymes that prevent the buildup of dangerous mutations. Furthermore, once enough copies of the germ-cell DNA get out into the world, sexual reproduction is no longer necessary. The somatic cells might add up to the familiar structures and faculties that make sexual congress mechanically (and tactically) possible, but they become just so much excess baggage.

These discoveries are of recent vintage and they remain controversial. Cellular suicide was first described in detail in 1972 by three Scottish scientists at the University of Aberdeen, who gave it the name *apoptosis*, from the Greek meaning "falling away," as in petals from a flower. Other parts of the picture—like the Hayflick limit, the number of times a somatic cell can divide before its self-destruct program goes into effect—have been supplied since. A complete and superbly written account of it all can be found in *Sex and the Origins of Death* (Oxford, 1996), by UCLA microbiologist William R. Clark.

The division of labor between somatic and germ cells is eminently reasonable from the DNA's point of view. From our point of view it is terrible. Gonads aside, we are agglomerations of somatic cells. Our brains—the seat of our consciousness, of our selves—are made up of components intent on commiting suicide as they become genetic garbage. Even if we evade disease and accident, senescence is sure to set in as more and more of our cells undergo programmed self-extinction. When enough of them die, so do we. In Clark's neat formulation, "Sex can save our germ cells, but it cannot save *us*."

But what if we could somehow turn off the suicide program in our cells? Mightn't that be the first step toward bodily immortality? In fact, this seems to be precisely how a rather creepy form of immortality was conferred on one Henrietta Lacks, an African-American resident of Baltimore. In 1951, Lacks, a mother of four then just entering her thirties, was admitted to Johns Hopkins Hospital with cervical cancer. A piece of her tumor was removed and as it happened, passed on by the pathologist to a researcher who was trying to grow human tissue in vitro.

The cells from Lacks—labeled HeLa, from the donor's first and last names—were astonishing. Unlike other human cell lines, which would grow for a while and then peter out, HeLa cells proliferated nonstop and consumed food voraciously. They seemed to have no senescence clock. Since this made them perfect for studying human cell biology, they were distributed to researchers all over the world. They were even sent into orbit aboard the Discover 17 satellite.

Once introduced into a lab, HeLa cells were so vigorous that they crowded out the other human cell lines. In the mid-1960s it was discovered, to the horror of medical researchers, that hundreds of published scientific papers supposedly describing how certain heart cells or liver cells behaved were actually about HeLa cells. (The fascinating story is recounted in Michael Gold's *A Conspiracy of Cells: One Woman's Immortal Legacy and the Medical Scandal It Caused*, SUNY Press, 1985.)

Since then, the exponential growth of HeLa cells has continued apace. Somehow—scientists are not sure how—their "death genes" have been deactivated. The number of them around the world today (and in space!) defies comprehension. Each contains a genetic blueprint for constructing Henrietta Lacks—who died back in 1951.

This is not the sort of deathlessness anyone desires. We want the immortality of a god, not of a tumor.

Or do we want even that? Most of us harbor a lively fear of death, but that fear is not logically equivalent to a craving for immortality. Though several interesting scientific schemes for immortality are afoot today (I'll describe them in a subsequent column), there is something very compelling about George Bernard Shaw's conclusion, at the age of ninety-two, that personal immortality would be an "unimaginable horror."

"What man," Shaw asked, "is capable of the insane self-conceit of believing that an eternity of himself would be tolerable even to himself?"

JIM HOLT

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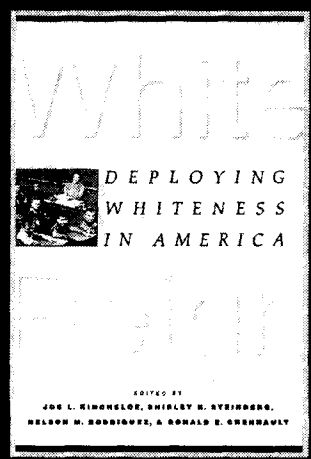

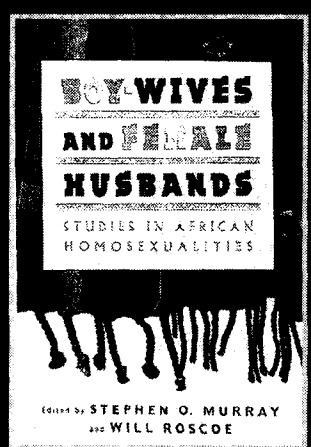

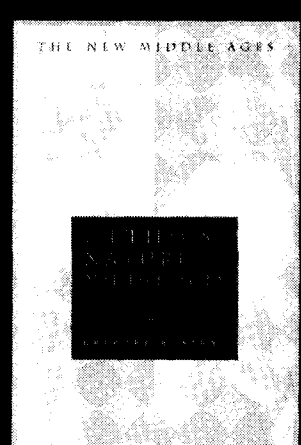

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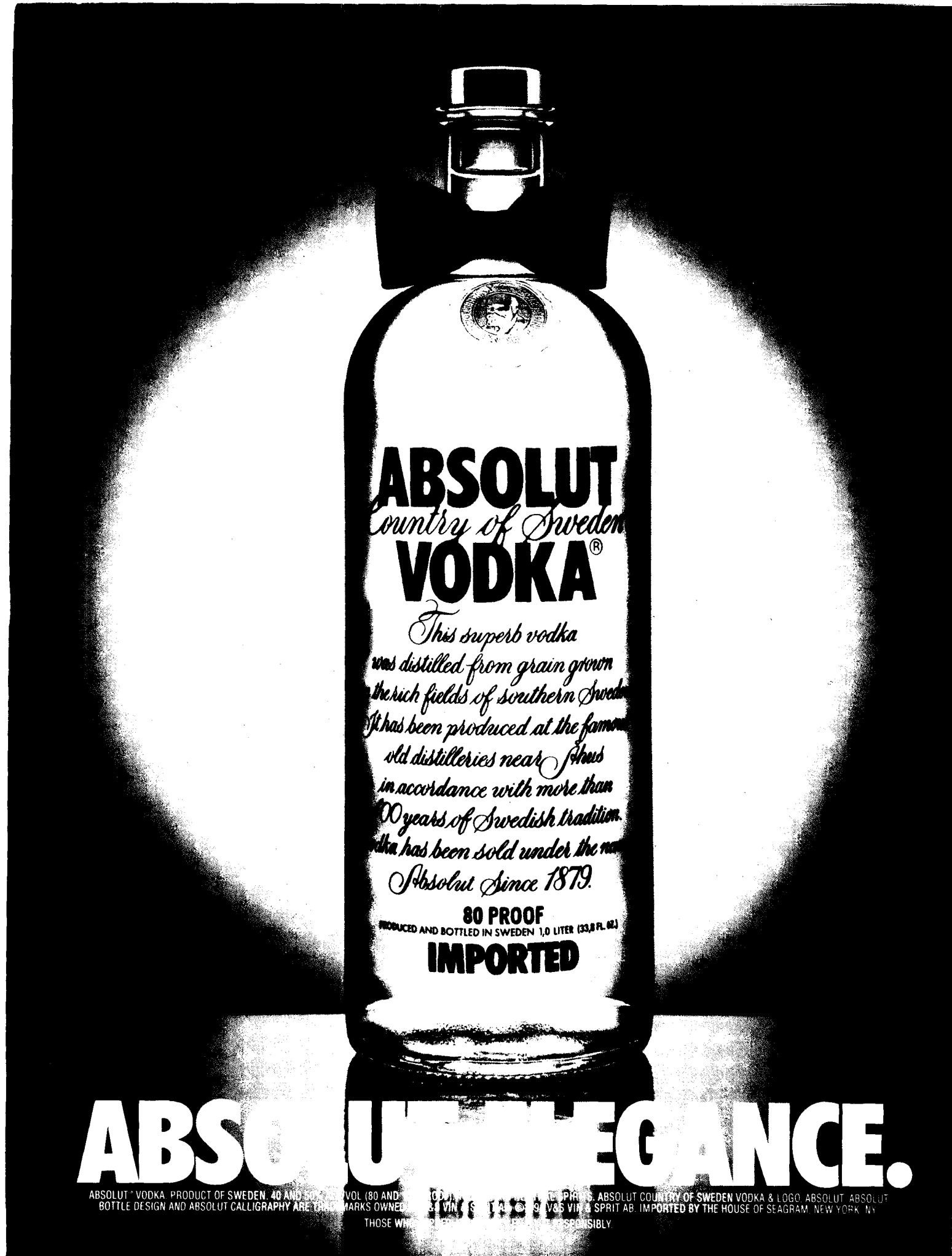
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